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HIGH LIGHTS OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

HILAIRE BELLOC

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HIGH LIGHTS OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION



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THE YOUNG ROYALIST

HIGH LIGHTS OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

BY

HILAIRE BELLOC

AUTHOR OF "ROBESPIERRE," "MARIE ANTOINETTE," ETC.

WITH MANY ILLUSTRATIONS
FROM PAINTINGS AND PRINTS



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PART ONE

THE ROYAL SEANCE



LOUIS XVI
From a photograph by Braun, Clément & Co., New York, of the painting by Antoine-François Callet, in Museum of Versailles

HIGH LIGHTS OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

PART ONE

THE ROYAL SEANCE

UPON the crest of the steep and thickly wooded hills that rise from the left bank of the Seine below Paris, you may find a village the old stones of which, and something spacious in its whole arrangement, are consonant with its name. It is called "Marly of the King."

There the great trees, the balustrade, and gates still standing recall the palace to which the French monarchy retired when leisure or fatigue or mourning withdrew it from Versailles; for it was a place more domestic and far less burdened with state.

To the gates of that great country house there came near ten o'clock, just after the hour when full darkness falls on a midsummer evening, a great

coach, driving from Versailles. It was the coach of the Archbishop of Paris, coming urgently to see the king, and the day was Friday, the nineteenth of June, 1789. They were in the full crisis that opened the Revolution. The tall windows of the palace were fully lit as the coach came up the drive. The night air was cold, for those June days were rainy and full of hurrying cloud. The Archbishop of Paris and his colleague of Rouen, who was with him, were summoned by their titles into the room where Louis XVI sat discussing what should be done for the throne.

Two days before, upon the Wednesday, the commons of the great Parliament—the Commons House in that great Parliament which had met again after a hundred years, and which now felt behind it the nation—had taken the first revolutionary step and had usurped authority. The quarrel which had hampered all reform since this Parliament of the States General had met six weeks before; the refusal of the two privileged orders and particularly of the nobles to vote with the commons and to form with them one National Assembly; the claim of the privileged orders and particularly of

the nobles to bar whatever the popular representatives might decide—all that had been destroyed in spirit by a new act of sovereignty.

Using the title that was on all men's lips and calling themselves the *"National Assembly,"* the commons had declared that the whole assembly was an indivisible body, and alone the organ of the nation. They had used with conscious purpose the solemn words, "Desires and decrees," which hitherto throughout all these centuries had never appeared above any seal or signature save that of a king. They had put body into this spiritual thing by the enormous decision that no tax should be paid in the kingdom that had not their approval.

This was the blow that had summoned the council round the king at Marly upon this Friday night. For now two anxious days doubtful issues and conflicting policies had pulled Louis this way and that, whether to yield, whether to compromise, or whether to strike back.

It was a fortnight since the sickly child who was heir to the throne had died, and this retirement of the royal family to Marly, consequent upon such

mourning, was confused by the numbness of that shock also. The king perhaps more than the queen had suffered in his powers and judgment; for Marie Antoinette, the most vigorous and lucid of those gathered in council at Marly, the least national, and the least wide in judgment, was active at this moment for the full claims of the crown.

With her at the king's side in the taking of this crucial decision stood other advisers. The king's two brothers, the elder and the younger, who, as Louis XVIII and Charles X, were to rule after the restoration, and who were now known under the titles of Provence and Artois, were in the palace together. Provence, the elder, very dull and heartless, was the more solid; Artois, the younger, empty, poor in judgment, was the least unattractive. They counted for their rank, and even Provence for little else.

Barentin was there, the keeper of the seals. He was a man of very clear decision, of straightforward speech and manner; a man with something sword-like about him. He thought and said that the king had only to move troops and settle matters at once.

There also, lit by the candles of that night, was



LOUIS-STANISLAS-XAVIER DE BOURBON, COMTE DE PROVENCE, AFTERWARD LOUIS XVIII
From a photograph by Braun, Clément & Co., New York, of a painting by Jean-Martial Fredou, belonging to Marquis de Virieu, at the Château de Lantilly

the vacuous, puffed face of Necker, the millionaire. This man, famous through his wealth, which was ill acquired and enormous, an alien in religion as in blood, had become, by one of those ironies in which the gods delight, the idol of the national movement. He was pitifully inferior to such an opportunity, empty of courage, empty of decision, and almost empty of comprehension. No idea informed him unless it was that of some vague financial liberalism (rather, say, moral anarchy) suitable to the crooked ways by which he himself had arrived. Those protruding eyes, that loose mouth, and that lethargic, self-satisfied expression were the idol that stood in the general mind for the giant things that were coming. Behind such brass was reddening the creative fire of the nation. Such a doorkeeper did Fate choose to open the gates for the armies of Marceau and Napoleon. All his advice was for something "constitutional." In days better suited for such men as he Necker would have been a politician, and a parliamentary politician at that.

To these, then, thus assembled entered the archbishops with their news. The news was this: that before sunset, just before they had left Versailles,

the clergy had rallied to the commons. The bishops, indeed, all save four, had stood out for the privileged orders; but the doubt in which all minds had been since the revolutionary step of forty-eight hours before was resolved. The clergy had broken rank with the nobles; for that matter, many of the wealthier nobles were breaking rank, too. Decision was most urgent; the moment was critical in the extreme, lest in a few hours the National Assembly, already proclaimed, already half formed, should arise united and in full strength over against the crown.

In not two hours after the arrival of the prelates the decision, nearly reached before they came, was finally taken by the king. He would follow Necker, and Necker was for a long, windy, complicated compromise. Necker was for a constitution, large, liberal, preventing the action of the popular life, preventing the yes and no of creative moods, leaving to the crown as much as would preserve its power to dissolve the States General and to summon a new body less national—and, above all, less violent. There is an English word for this temper, the word "Whig." But that word is associated in

the English language with the triumph of wealth. Necker's muddy vision did not triumph.

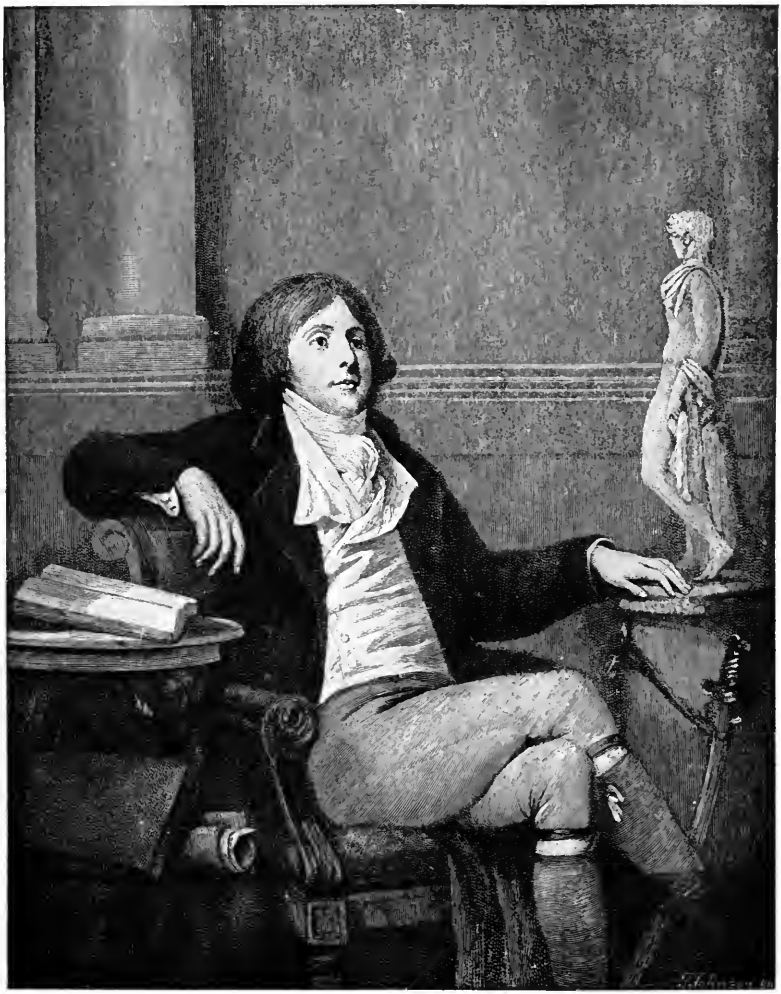
That decision was taken upon this Friday night, the nineteenth of June, 1789—taken, I think, a little before midnight. Artois was off to bed, and Provence, too. The council was broken up. It was full midnight now when wheels were heard again upon the granite sets before the great doors, and the hot arrival of horses. The name announced was that of Talleyrand, the Bishop of Autun, and the king, perhaps angrily, refused to see him.

This man, with eyes like a ferret and an intelligence as keen as it was witty and narrow, a brad-awl of a mind, as invincible at intrigue as in vice, given up wholly to the search for personal advantage, had about him all that the plain piety of Louis XVI detested, and all that Louis XVI's slow mind most feared. The king had made him Bishop of Autun against his every judgment, and only at the call of Talleyrand's fellow-clergymen, who loved their comrade's witty sallies against religion and his reputation of the brain. It was a reputation that had led Rome to consider the making of him a car-

dinal, and only Louis himself had prevented it. For Louis profoundly believed. It was Louis who had said in those days just before the Revolution, "I will give no man the see of Paris who denies his God."

Such was Talleyrand, thirty-five years of age, destined to compass the ruin of the French church, to ordain to the schismatic body which attempted to replace it, to be picked out by Danton for his very vices as a good emissary to Pitt, to be one of the levers of Napoleon, to be the man that handed the crown to Louis XVIII at the restoration. Such was the man, full of policy and of evil, whom on that midnight Louis XVI refused to see.

The king refused to see him with the more determination that Talleyrand had asked for a secret audience. Talleyrand sent a servant to the king's younger brother, Artois, who knew him well, and Artois, who was in bed, asked him to come to the bedroom to speak to him, which he did; and there in that incongruous place, to the empty-headed man lying abed listening to him, Talleyrand, till well after midnight, set forth what should be done. He also came, he said, hot-foot from Versailles, a



CHARLES MAURICE DE TALLEYRAND

witness, and he had twenty times the grip of any of these others, he said, to seize what had happened.

He offered, as such men do, a bargain. He had prepared it, as such men will, for immediate acceptance; "all thought out," as people say to-day of commercial "propositions." Let him form a ministry. (He had actually brought in his carriage with him certain friends who would support him in it!) They would rapidly summon military force, dissolve the assembly at once, erect a new one that would be at the service of the crown. Artois dressed and went to see the king. But his brother gave him short shrift, and bade him tell Talleyrand to go. Then Talleyrand, with that look in his eyes, I think, that was noted so often when, later, he found himself thwarted in any one of his million plots and forced to creep round by some new way, went out to serve the Revolution.

At the same time there was sent through the night to Versailles the royal order, to be proclaimed by heralds, that no meeting of the Parliament should take place until the Monday when, in the commons' hall, the king would declare his will to all the three houses, clergy, commons, and nobles

assembled; and that will, of course, was to be the muddled-compromise of Necker.

These things done, they slept at last in Marly, and the very early dawn of the Saturday broke in a sky still troubled, rainy, and gray.

Bailly, the president of the commons, sitting at Versailles, was a man such as are thrown to the surface in times of peace. He was honest and rich, a little paunchy, sober, and interested in astronomy. He was not without courage of the less vivid sort. He was fifty-three years of age.

Bailly, the dignified spokesman of the commons in this awful crisis, was in his bed at Versailles, like everybody else except sentries, watchmen, and a few political intriguers, upon this very short summer night of dull, rainy weather. They knocked at his door and woke him to bring him a note. It was a very curt note from the master of the ceremonies at the court. It told him that the great hall in which the commons met was not to be used by the commons that day, that Saturday; for it was to be decorated for the royal session of all the estates, to be held there upon the Monday, when the king

would address the States General together and tell them his will.

It is not a weak spur to a man of such an age, especially if he is well to do, to have his dignity neglected and his sleep interrupted as well. Bailly had thought the commons worthy of more respect and of better notice. When, therefore, the members came, most of them under dripping umbrellas, to the door that should admit them to their great hall, Bailly was at their head as indignant as such a man could be. He found the door shut, a paper pinned upon it, whereon was written the royal order, and a sentry who told him and all his followers that no one could come in save the workmen; for it would take all that day to prepare the hall for the royal meeting upon Monday. They let Bailly in to fetch his papers, no more.

The commons went off under their umbrellas in the rain, a straggling procession of men, mostly middle class, in good black knee-breeches and coat, in dainty buckled shoes not meant for such weather, Bailly leading them; they made off, this dripping lot of them, and made history quickly and well. They found in an adjoining street an

empty tennis-court at their disposal, and there they met, organized a session, and took the oath, with one dissentient, that they would not disperse until they had achieved a new constitution for the French.

The French do things themselves, a point in which they differ from the more practical nations. For instance, Macmahon, the soldier and president, used to brush his own coat every morning. Barentin, the keeper of the seals, followed all this business, but he followed it in person. From the window of a house just across the narrow way he himself overlooked through the clearstory of the tennis-court the swarm of the commons within, the public audience that thronged the galleries or climbed to the sills of the windows. He saw the eagerness and the resolve. He scribbled a rough note to be sent at once to Marly—a note that has come to light only in the last few years, "Il faut couper court." That is, "End things up at once, or it will be too late."

The royal session and the king's declaration were postponed. They did not take place upon the Monday for which they were planned; they were



JEAN-SYLVAIN BAILLY, PRESIDENT OF THE COMMONS IN 1789

put forward to the Tuesday, the twenty-third of June. What passed during those two days men will debate according as they are biased upon one side or the other of this great quarrel. Necker would have it in his memoirs that he was overborne by Barentin and, as one may say, by the queen's party; that his original compromise was made a little stronger in favor of the crown. To this change, like the weak and false man he was, he would ascribe all the breakdown that followed. I do not believe him. I think he lied. We know how he made his fortune, and we know how to contrast the whole being of a man like Necker with the whole being of a man like Barentin. Read Barentin's notes on those same two days, and you will have little doubt that Necker lied. That he muddled things worse through the delay and through the increasing gravity of the menace to the throne is probable enough. That he showed any vision or determination or propounded any strict policy is not morally credible. The document which the king was to read was drawn up wholly in his own hand, and he was wholly responsible.

Now turn to Versailles upon the morning of that

Tuesday, the twenty-third of June, 1789, the court having come in from Marly, and all being ready for the great occasion. Remember that in the interval the commons had met again; the mass of the lower clergy had joined them, not by vote this time, but in person, and two archbishops and three bishops with them, and even from the nobles two men had come.

It was therefore to be a set issue between the National Assembly now rapidly forming, that is, the commons triumphant, and the awful antique authority of the crown.

If one had looked from the windows of the palace of Versailles upon that morning, still gray and rainy, still cold in weather, out toward the scene where so much was to be done, one would have caught beyond the great paved, semicircular place, beyond the gilded, high railings of the courtyard, in the central one of the three avenues, the broad road leading to Paris, the roof of a great barnlike building, a long parallelogram of stone and brick, with an oval skylight atop. There was but little to hide it, for the ground about was only beginning to be built over; young trees, just planted,

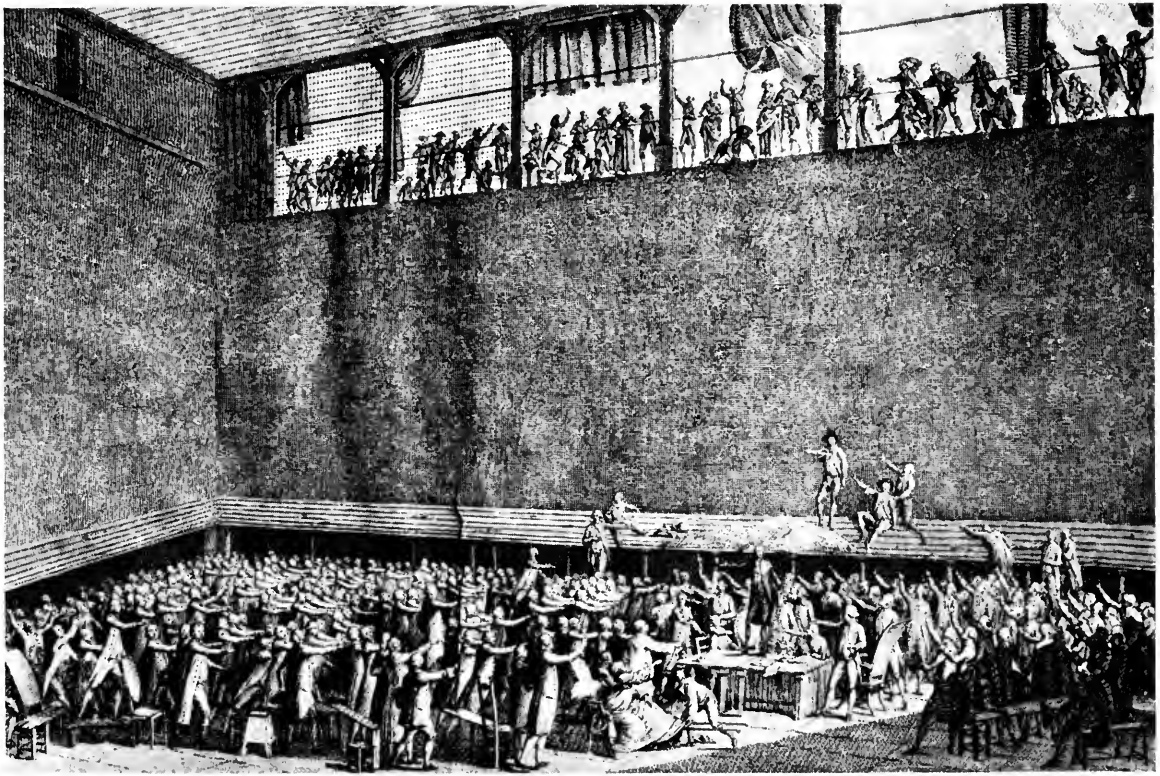
marked each side of the road upon which one end of this building abutted. Within this hall, ungainly, and oddly apparent above the lower roofs about it and the unfinished lower buildings of the quarter, was to be acted a drama which deflected and, as some believe, destroyed the immemorial institution of personal government in Europe, and launched those experiments by which the French people in arms proposed to change the face of Christendom.

Under the rain and in the cold air of that morning there was not much movement in Versailles. The great desert of hard paving-stones before the gilded railings of the palace yard was almost empty save of troops, and these, not yet arrived in very great numbers, seemed to be doing the work of a police rather than of an army. They were drawn up in lines that cut the Paris road and its approaches, guarding on all sides this hall of the commons. The side streets which led past the back doors of that hall, the Street of St. Martin and the Street of the Works, had each their cordon of men. Small groups of soldiery, not patrolling, but watching, were distributed here and there.

The eye caught in the glistening, empty spaces of that wet, gray morning the red of the Swiss Guard and the blue and white of the militia. Beyond these uniforms there was little else; no crowd was yet gathered. Nor was there as yet any parade or any standing to arms.

The ear could no more judge Versailles that morning than the eye. The rain was too soft for any noise, the early life of the town too dulled under such weather to send up any echo from the streets. But there could still be distinguished from that quarter of a mile away the occasional sound of hammering where the workmen within the hall were finishing the last of its decorations for the ceremony that was to take place that day. It was a little before nine o'clock in the morning.

That large hall had its main entrance upon the new wide, bare Avenue de Paris, with its sprigs of trees. Years before it had been built to house the rackets and the tennis nets, perhaps the scenery of plays—all the material of the lesser pleasures of the court; for which reason it was still called the "Menus-Plaisirs," that is, the "Petty Leisures." It had stood for some forty years, and the things



THE COMMONS TAKING THE OATH IN THE TENNIS-COURT AT VERSAILLES

to be warehoused had come in by its principal opening upon this great main road.

By this main door you might have seen, under the rain, one after another entering as the morning wore on to ten o'clock. Some came on foot, most in the carriages of their equipage; but every individual, driven or walking, first halted at the line of armed men that barred the avenue, showed a card to prove that he was a deputy, cleric, or noble, and only then was let through. But though the public gathered slowly (in such weather!) the careful policing of the streets by these armed men was maintained, and the lines of red and blue still stood across the Avenue de Paris. They so came slowly up and in, the two privileged orders for one hour, six hundred in all.

The hour drew to its close. Before the bugles up in the low, wooded heights to the south had sounded for the ten o'clock meal of the camp, before the hour had struck from the clocks of the churches, files drew up to line the street on each side, and a guard stood before the porch.

Much farther down the road, beyond a second line of soldiery which barred access from that far

side also, a small, but gathering, crowd of citizens showed far and small. Mixed with them and passing through them were figures hurrying toward a narrow side street which ran to a back entrance of the Menus-Plaisirs—men in knee-breeches and short coats, all in black, solemn. Those distant figures in black thus mixing with the crowd and getting in by a back way were the commons, the men who had just claimed to be all France, to be sovereign. They had not been permitted to come in by the main door of their hall; they were under orders to reach the place in this fashion by the meaner street behind it.

Even that back door was shut against them. Of the four thousand soldiers all told who formed the ornament, the patrol, and the barriers of those streets, one guard was set at this closed back door forbidding entry. The six hundred commons, crowded and pushing under their dripping umbrellas, began loud complaints, suggested protests, egged on their officials and in particular their president. He, Bailly, the middle-aged astronomer, full of rectitude, simple, and pompous, still called it an insult to be kept thus. But the guard had no

orders and would not open. Such citizens as had assembled in the street mixed now with the commons, supported their indignation. The rain still fell.

It was not until nearly a full hour had passed, until a commotion farther up toward the palace, and the shouted presenting of arms announced the arrival of the king that these six hundred, now at the limit of their restrained and profound exasperation, were at last admitted to the ramshackle wooden corridor that was their only vestibule. They folded their umbrellas, shook the rain from their cloaks, and, hat under arm, filed through the inner way which led to the back of the hall. Thus did they meanly enter it last, humiliated and angry, they who would be the nation itself.

The commons filed in two by two through the side door at the end of the great hall. They saw before them, under the great veiled, oval skylight of the place, the ranks of the clergy and of the nobles already assembled, rows deep, upon each side of the central gangway. They saw the throne, with its noble hangings roof high and spangled with lilies, upon the raised platform at the farther

end. They saw the whole place draped and painted and upholstered as it had been for the great ceremony of the Parliament's opening seven weeks before. It was eleven o'clock.

Upon the king's right the queen, suffering somewhat from that theatrical dignity which had been the bane of her carriage at the court, and had so offended the French sense of measure, courtesied deep, and would not be seated while the king still stood. Before the throne the ministry sat in rank; but one chair was empty, and all men gazed at it. It was amazing that this chair should be empty, for it was the chair of the chief minister: it was Necker's chair.

What was about to be done was Necker's doing. It was he who had written the words the king was to read. But that very morning he had grown afraid. He had ordered his carriage to take him with the rest; then, seeing how feeling had risen, persuaded partly by his women, partly by a native duplicity, that something was to be gained by a dramatic absence and a show of displeasure at what he knew would clash with opinion, he had at the last moment shirked and remained at home. He be-



JACQUES NECKER, RECTOR-GENERAL OF FINANCES

trayed the king by that shirking. He left it to be thought that he was not the author of his own words. Unlike most traitors, he reaped no reward.

Whether rumors of what was to come had leaked out or not we cannot tell. Some of that great audience afterward said that they knew what was toward, and certainly among the two privileged orders there were a few who had heard the tenor of the speech. There were even one or two among the commons. But for the great bulk of those who waited curiously for the fruition of so dreadful a moment, the fruit of that moment was still unknown until the herald announced his cry, until the rustle of seating was over, and the king spoke.

What he spoke in his simple, good-natured, rather thick voice was, for those who heard it, enormous. His first words raised the issue directly before men had well realized the shock—the royal authority was advising a reversal of all that had been done in the six days:

"I thought, gentlemen, that I had done all in my power for the good of my subjects. . . . The States General [not the *National Assembly*] have been open now near two months, and they are not

yet agreed upon the preliminaries of their business. . . . It is my duty, it is a duty which I owe to the common weal, and to my realm and to myself, to end these divisions. . . . I come to repress whatever has been attempted against the laws."

He sat down, and every phrase in the five minutes or so of the declaration drawn up for him had seemed to the commons and their partizans a challenge.

The king's face, if witnesses may be trusted, showed some surprise. There is an air in assemblies which can be felt, though not defined, and the dense rows in black at the end of the hall were hostile.

Barentin came up the steps of the throne and knelt, as custom demanded, then turned and said in a loud voice, "The king orders you to be covered."

Bailly put on his hat, sundry of his commons followed his example. The privileged orders for some reason made no such gesture. In the passions of the moment it was thought that they deliberately insulted the third order, as though not caring for the privilege of remaining covered before the king,

if the commons were to share that privilege. At any rate, Bailly nervously uncovered again, and those who had followed his example followed it once more. There was a little laughter, a little subdued challenging. They ceased as the articles of the king's main declaration—Necker's document—were read for him by his minister.

There were twenty-five of them; each was short, and their delivery no great matter in time. But in effect they were capital. They maintained the separation of the three orders. They broke the unity of the National Assembly. They permitted common sessions, only upon questions common to all.

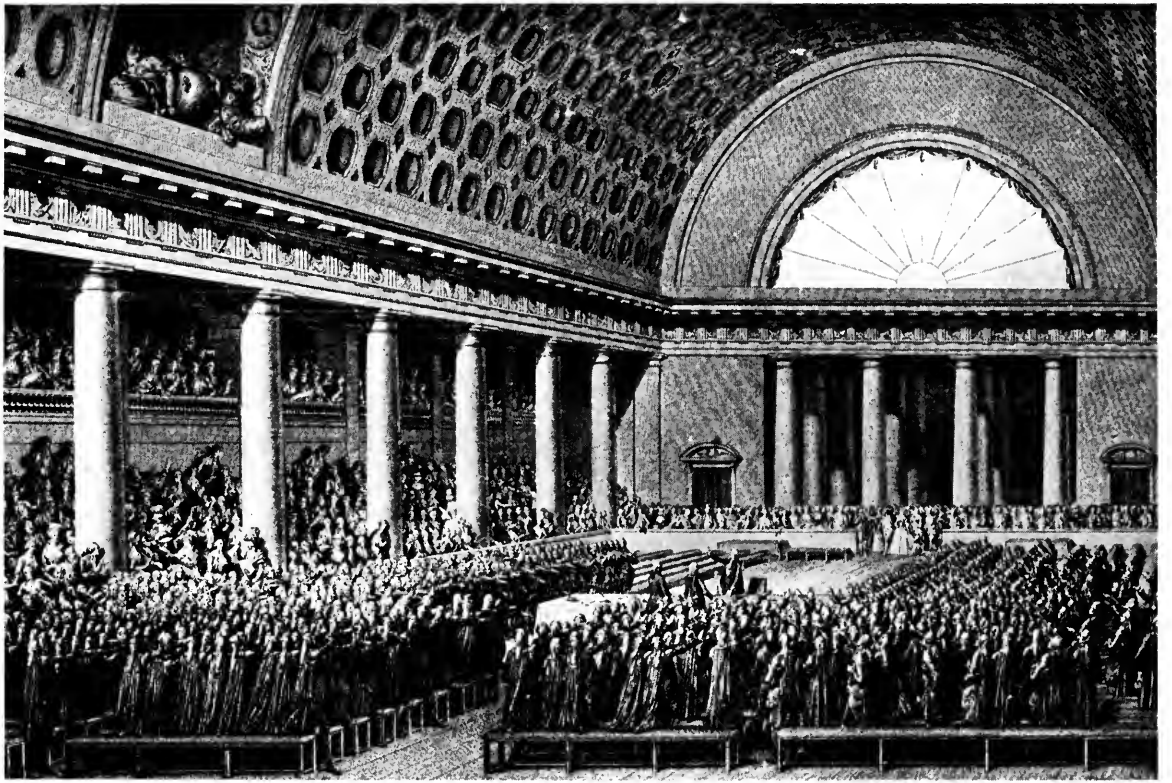
Louis spoke again for a moment. Next were read the thirty-five articles Necker meant for a "liberal" constitution to the nation.

Those who have attended the ritual of assemblies know how superficial and imperfect is the effect of such a preliminary single reading. Men strain their ears for this point and for that, but they do not grasp the details of what has been put before them. What reaches from the lips of the reader to his audience is not, as in book-work, a precise and

complete plan; it is only a general effect. Those thirty-five articles, droned out in the official accent, liberally as many of them were interpreted upon a further study, tolerably coördinated as they may have seemed to Necker and to those who drafted them in the clique of the council-chamber, meant for the commons a direct challenge. And the commons were right. The French Revolution was not permitted for politicians' work of this kind. Flame is not made for pap. Yet challenging as Necker's futilities were to the ardor of the time, it was not they that determined the gravity of that short hour. What determined it was the last and third speech of the king.

Louis rose for the third time at the conclusion of this reading, and in brief sentences told them they had heard his will. He reminded them that they could do nothing without his specific approbation; he used the famous phrase that, if he were abandoned in his enterprise, "he would alone carry out the good of his peoples." His last sentence was this:

"I order you, gentlemen, to separate at once, and to-morrow to come each of you to the place set



THE MEETING OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AT VERSAILLES, JUNE, 1789

apart for your respective orders, there to resume your debates. To this effect I have ordered the grand master of ceremonies to prepare the places where you are to meet."

During each brief interlude of the king's own speaking all had preserved a profound attention. During the reading of the articles there had been now and then a slight applause, especially from certain of the nobles at the article in favor of the old feudal dues, and to that applause there had come isolated cries of "Silence!" from the commons. Nothing else had disturbed the ease, the dignity, and the rapidity of this one hour pregnant with war. One hour, for it was eleven when the king first entered; as he rose to dismiss them and leave the hall it was noon.

When the king had passed behind the glorious, roof-high curtains of the throne, and so gone out, there was a noise of men moving.

All the three hundred of the nobility rose and followed him. A great number of the clergy—most of that order—came after. The hall was left desolate in its center; most desolate where its great empty dais, splendid with the purple drapings and

the embroidered lilies of gold, and the empty throne dominated the floor below.

The far end and the dark aisles behind the columns were still filled with the commons in a crowd. Some remained still seated, some few more had risen; all were keeping silent, and only a very few crept shamefacedly along the walls toward the doors.

With the commons there now mixed such of the clergy as had dared to remain, and not a few of the public audience; of these last many lingered curiously, hanging on in the corners and sides of the place, watching for what was to come.

One could not see from that hall any part of the life without. Its windows were high. Its principal light was from the glazed, oval skylight in the roof, covered and tempered by a veil of cloth. One could not hear the crowd which had gathered outside in the broad avenue to see the king and his coaches go by, and which remained in great numbers to attend the exit of the commons when these should leave. That inner place was isolated. But the seven or eight hundred men standing at bay therein could feel all about them the great mass of

soldiery upon the heights in the woods, the regiments marching in from the frontiers, the gatherings of mob and of armed men against them down the valley in Paris, two hours away—all the expectancy of arms.

Workmen entered to remove the hangings and to dismantle the hall. Still the commons kept their places, as yet undecided; no general decision taken, none proposed, but yet the mass of them unmoving, and by their mere unmoving refusing the command of the crown.

It was at this moment, before as yet the artisans had begun their business of ladders and hammering, that there came out from the robing-room and from behind the cloths of the throne a figure with which the ceremony of the States General had already rendered them familiar: it was young Dreux Brézé, elegant, a trifle effeminate, little more than a boy. He carried his white wand of the master of ceremonies, as he had carried it when the session opened, and his person was, by the costume of his office, all gold and plumes and many diamonds.

He performed his simple duty: he came up to Bailly, the president, and said:

"Sir, you heard the order of the king?"

Bailly answered in silence, while men craned forward to hear:

"Sir, the Assembly stands adjourned only by its own vote. I cannot disperse it until it has debated upon that adjournment." A pompous rigmarole enough, but thick with coming years.

Said young Brézé:

"Am I to give that to the king as your reply?"

And Bailly answered:

"Yes."

Then, turning to his colleagues, Bailly had begun to give his reasons to them, when he found striding up to his side, and facing Brézé, the heavy vigor of Mirabeau. It was Mirabeau, so striding up, who in his powerful voice interposed. With no official right to mandate, he spoke most famous words, of which tradition has made a varied and doubtful legend, but which were in substance these:

"Go tell those that sent you we are here by the will of the nation." He added either that force alone (of bayonets or what-not) could drive the commons out, or, as some say, that such force was powerless.



EMANUEL JOSEPH SIEYES
Député de la Ville de Paris
à l'Assemblée Nationale en 1789
Elu président le 7 Juin 1790

A Paris, chez l'AUTEUR, Quay des Augustins N° 71 an 3e

EMMANUEL-JOSEPH SIEYÈS, DEPUTY FROM PARIS TO THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Even as he said it, Brézé, having his answer from the official head of the commons, thus recalcitrant, moved away. The custom of the court was on him, and he moved out backward with his white wand. Of the men who saw that piece of ritual, some said within themselves that the thing was a sign, and that sovereignty had passed from the Bourbons.

When he had gone there was silence again for a little while. It was broken by the workmen setting to their labor of dismantling the hall. Bailly ordered them to cease, and they obeyed the order.

The genius of the French people for decision and for manifold coöperation appeared again and again throughout the Revolution, in debate, in street fighting, upon the battle-fiēld. Nowhere did it appear more clearly than at this origin of all the movement.

Without traditional procedure, with no waiting on initiative from above, at this moment spontaneous and collective action decided all.

One voice, proposing an adjournment until tomorrow, was voted down at once. Next Sieyès, with his firm, accurate mouth, pronounced a graven phrase expressing the mind of all: "You are to-

day what you were yesterday." Immediately, upon the motion of Camus, a man too legal, but well able to define, the commons and such of the clergy as had remained with them voted unanimously their contradiction to the throne. They voted that all that they had passed, and all that they had done, they still maintained.

As the hands which had been raised everywhere to vote this motion fell again, the corner of French history was turned, and those curious to choose a precise point at which the outset of any matter may be set, should choose that moment of the fall of those hundreds of hands for the origin of modern Europe, its vast construction, its still imperiled experiment.

One thing more remained to be done, though the general sense of those present did not at first grasp its necessity; the proposal and the carrying of it proceeded from the vivid sanity of Mirabeau. He it was who proposed that they should vote the inviolability of themselves, the deputies of the nation.

To pass that decree meant that *if* the Assembly should win, it would have, for the punishment of any that had attempted to defeat it by force, the

awful weapon which a solemn declaration of intention gives. But it also meant that if the commons were defeated, they had been guilty of treason.

Bailly, perhaps from confusion, perhaps from timidity, himself hesitated, until Mirabeau, understanding well what force it is that governs men, said:

"If you do not pass this motion, sixty of us, and you the first, will be arrested this very night."

A column of troops had already been formed outside the doors, though the decision to act at once was, perhaps in fear of Paris, not acted on by the crown. Five hundred and twenty-seven men passed the decree, and of these thirty-four voted "No," four hundred and ninety-three, "Yes." Its operative words are significant:

The National Assembly declares . . . that every individual corporation, tribunal, court or commission, which may dare during or after the present session to pursue, seek out, arrest, or cause to be arrested . . . a deputy upon the ground of any profession, advice, opinion, or speech made by him in the States General, no matter by whom such at-

tempts may be ordered, are guilty of treason and subject to capital punishment.

This voted, there was no more to be done.

The many men who had thus risked all looked at one another; Bailly declared the session at an end. They came out upon the crowds that still waited in the lifting weather outside, that cheered a little, and that wonderingly followed the dispersion of the deputies to their homes.

The king and those who had left with him had lunched at the midday hour. They were past their coffee when the business of their antagonists was thus accomplished. The commons and the curious who had waited in the streets for their exit were late for luncheon that day.

In a week, and two days more than a week, the battle was won. The clergy in a body had come in, the nobles in batch after batch, the National Assembly was fully composed at last, and Louis himself, writing to the privileged orders—such as still refused—to bow to the commons, had accepted defeat, and his sovereignty was never from that moment full.



GABRIEL HONORÉ RIQUETTI, COMTE DE MIRABEAU

PART TWO

THE FLIGHT TO VARENNES

INTRODUCTION

After the successful assertion by the commons of their new usurped powers over the crown, as described in our first paper, a second attempt at coercion, backed by the foreign mercenary troops in the service of the king, failed. The depots of arms at the Invalides and the Bastille in Paris were sacked by the populace, and the latter was taken by force upon the same day, July 14, 1789. The first principles of the Revolution were laid in resolutions of the parliament at Versailles during the summer, notably the declaration known as that of the "Rights of Man" and the abolition of the feudal property of the nobility.

Another popular rising in the capital in the month of October brought the court back to Paris, and the parliament followed it. For eighteen months the tide of democratic reform rose with greater and greater violence, and while the crown still remained the sole executive of the nation, possessed of all immediate control over the regular armed forces and the disbursement of public money, the personal peril of the royal family grew greater, and the term within which it seemed certain that the executive would lose its authority drew near.

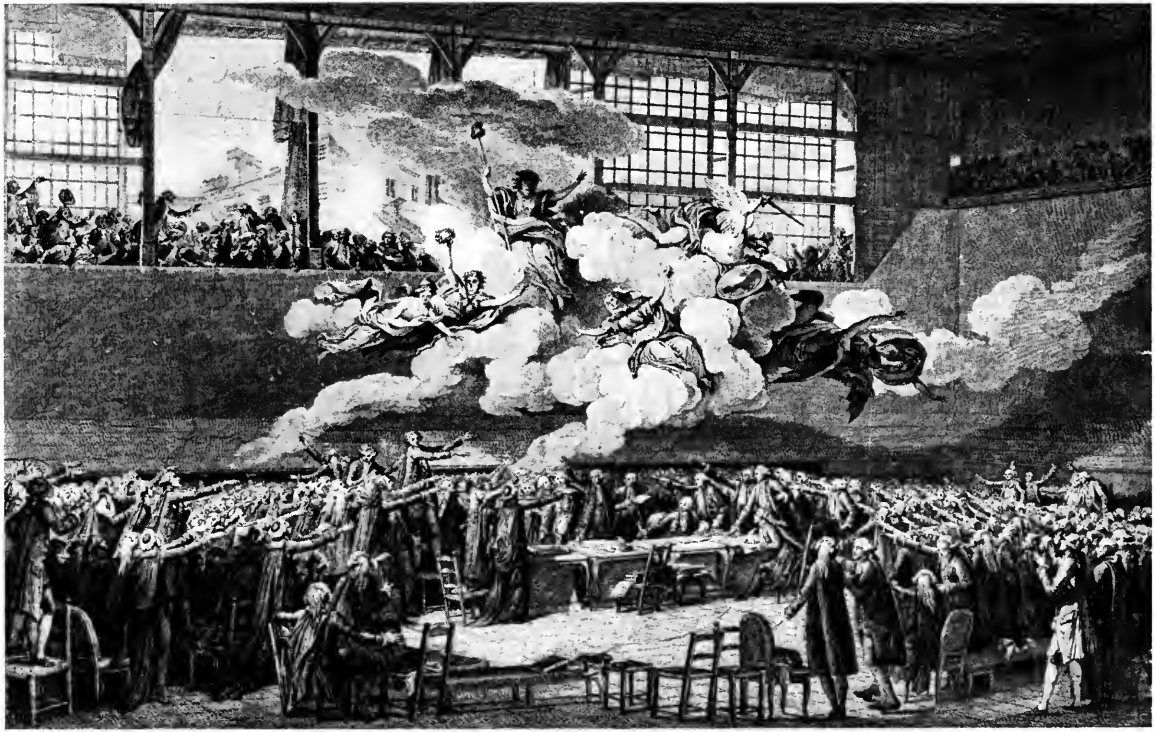
There stood between the monarchy—the one vital institution of the French—and its ruin no real forces save the personality of Mirabeau and the regular troops. As

against the latter there had been raised and organized a considerable militia, duly armed by law and present in every village and town in the country; while the mass of the regular troops had purposely been stationed at a distance from Paris through the growing power of the parliament.

A foreign war was threatened through the desire of every ancient authority in Europe to repress the movement, and with the approaching threat of invasion, which could not but serve the king, the unpopularity, and therefore the danger, of his family grew greater still.

Mirabeau, who dominated the parliament by his personality even more than by his oratory and his prodigious industry, had secretly entered into the service of the court in his determination to save the monarchy, in the fall of which he believed would be involved the breakdown of the country. He had drawn up a regular plan presupposing and inviting civil war. He would have the king leave Paris for some post such as Compiègne, not more than a day's posting away, and from that point appeal to the people and to the army to support him. All this work of Mirabeau was being done in the winter of 1790–91.

Meanwhile the personal alarm of the queen, backed by her rare energy, preferred a complete flight with her husband and children, either to the frontier itself or beyond it, a total undoing of the Revolution if that flight were successful, and the return of the monarchy, backed not only by the army, but by the threat of foreign powers and of invasion.



ALLEGORY OF THE OATH-TAKING IN THE TENNIS-COURT AT VERSAILLES

In this perhaps impracticable and too heroic scheme, utterly anti-national, her great ally was Fersen, a Swedish nobleman who had loved her with devotion from his first youth, and whom she, since her misfortunes began, had come to love as devotedly in return.

It seems certain that the overmastering ability of Mirabeau would have carried his plan and would probably have saved the French monarchy had he lived. But he died from overwork upon the second of April, 1791, and with him lacking, nothing could prevent the maturing of the queen's plan.

A fortnight after Mirabeau's death the mob had prevented the king from leaving Paris, in a perfectly open manner, for a visit to one of his suburban palaces, and the great militia guard of the palace had not shown discipline or loyalty.

After that nothing remained but to fix a date for secret flight, and this date was ultimately fixed for the night of the twentieth of June.

Fersen worked out all the plans in detail. He had the great traveling-coach, or berlin, specially built; the commander of the army upon the eastern frontier, Bouillé, was warned and provided posts to receive the fugitives when they should have proceeded a little more than a hundred miles from Paris, and to conduct them in safety to Montmédy upon the extreme frontier; whence, when he should safely have reached it, the king was to issue his proclamation to the army and to the people. The traveling disguises for the royal family were prepared; three

gentlemen of their former guard were trusted to accompany the flight. A passport in the name of Mme. de Korff, a Russian lady resident in Paris, was obtained, and the queen was to travel in that name with her two children, and her husband as a servant.

PART TWO

THE FLIGHT TO VARENNES

UPON the evening of Monday, the twentieth of June, 1791, a little before nine o'clock, Axel de Fersen was leaning, with his chin in his hands, his elbows upon the parapet, looking over the bridge called the Pont Royal, which leads from the Tuileries to the southern bank of the Seine. He watched the dying light upon the river below, and waited with desperate impatience in his heart, his body lounging in affected indolence.

The sky above was cloudy. The day had been hot, but its last hours not sunlit. A freshness was now coming up from the Seine over the town, and the noises of life and movement that rise with the closing of the working hours in the capital filled the streets. He was dressed in the rough habit of a cabman, and the poor coach of which he had the driving stood in rank with others a little way from the gate of the palace.

As he so gazed, two men, one with a sunken, long-jawed face and small, peering eyes, the other frail, slight, and younger, both dressed in a faded yellow livery as of servants to some rich man of a time before the Revolution had abolished liveries, came up to him. He knew already who they were. They were Moustier and Valory, two gentlemen of the king's disbanded guard who, in the disguise of servants, had volunteered to serve Louis in his flight. Fersen gave them the instructions that they awaited, for one was to find and conduct the great coach he had had built and to keep it waiting for Fersen at the gates of the city; the other was to act as outrider and to go before to prepare the relays. A third, Malden, remained hidden in the apartments of the king.

Night fell, an hour passed, and two women in the conduct of a man who hurried them across the bridge were put into a chaise that there awaited them and drove off. Fersen knew that mission also. These were the two waiting-women of the queen, going on ahead through the night to the second posting-station at Claye upon the eastern road. A little while later—it was eleven o'clock, or a little



"VIVE LE ROI! VIVE LA NATION!"
A Cartoon of 1789

past—a woman came to him leading two children, two girls, it seemed, one old enough to walk alone, the other whom she held by the hand. It was Mme. de Tourzel, the governess of the royal children. The elder girl was the princess royal. The young child, disguised as her sister, was the dauphin, the little heir to the throne. Many were going in and out of the palace at that moment. This small group in somber clothing drew no one's eye in the half-light. The children were put into the cab, the woman followed, and Fersen, with the most cabman-like way in the world, climbed slowly up to his box and drove at a very quiet pace westward along the quay that flanks the Tuileries gardens. He came to the great open place which to-day is called the Place de la Concorde, where the half-finished bridge had only just lost its last workman with the end of the day; he turned to the right across its paving and up the rue Royale until he came to the narrow rue St. Honoré, where again he turned his shabby team to the right and drove as leisurely eastward.

There is a place, now rebuilt out of all recognition, the ways broadened, all the houses modern,

where a street still called by the name of "Ladder Street" (the rue de l'Echelle) comes into the rue St. Honoré. It is a very short street leading toward the palace. Between the Tuileries and those few yards of way there stood in those days a number of great houses, the homes of certain nobles who had been about the court, and in the midst of their confused carved fronts was an archway that led to the royal stables, and by a narrow lane to the courtyard of the palace itself.

In that Street of the Ladder Fersen halted, drawing his cab up toward the curb. The long detour over which he had purposely lingered had taken him nearly three quarters of an hour; it was near twelve. He got down from the box, went to the carriage window, and said a word or two, bidding the woman and the two children wait in patience. Then he paced up and down the rough paving as midnight deepened, sauntering in the fashion of cabmen that await a fare.

Such light as there was between the high houses came from dim oil lamps slung from wall to wall and far apart. There was light also in the guard-room at the corner of the archway, and there a

militiaman stood sentry with fixed bayonet, for every issue from the palace was thus guarded. The street was full of people coming and going from that little town the Tuileries, and as the hour wore on, the great equipages of those who attended court passed in to take their masters up at the royal porch and passed out again on their way homeward.

Fersen knew that the last ceremonies would not be over until very late, but that did not relieve his increasing anxiety. The darkness seemed to grow more profound as he waited. He watched with as little show as might be the throngs that passed back and forth through the archway; he saw no figure of those he was awaiting until, when it was quite dark—for though there was a moon, the curtain of clouds was thick—he saw, or thought he saw, seated upon a stone bench against one of the great houses a woman whose attitude even in that gloom he thought he knew. With the same leisurely pace of a man free from employment he sauntered past, noted the gray dress and broad, gray veiled hat under the dim light of the distant lamps, and the veil about the face, and coming closer still, knew that it was Madame Elizabeth, the king's sister.

He spoke in a whisper, without turning to her or stopping as he went slowly by. He made an imperceptible movement of the head toward the cab, saying, "They wait for you." She did not move, and he feared for a moment that she might not have understood what he had said or recognized him, for he dared not linger. He paced back again toward his charge and again whispered the words as he passed, still looking down at the ground; and this time the woman rose, went to the cab, and entered it.

The lights behind the shutters of the great houses had gone out, the distant noises in the palace hard by had ceased, the last of the equipages were rumbling through the archway, and still there was no sign of new-comers for him. It was long past midnight, nearly one o'clock. Another of the cabmen in the rank spoke to him. He answered as best he could with the manner, accent, and slang of the trade. He offered this unwelcome friend a pinch of snuff from a rough box; then he went back as though to look to his horses, felt their legs, stood about them a little, and patted them.

There was still, but very rarely, a belated servant



THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY FETRIFIED. THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY REVIVIFIED
Caricatures by Gillray

or so passing out from under the arch, and at last, when his fever of expectation was at the height, he distinguished two such, a man and a woman, coming toward him unhurriedly. As they came nearer, and the feeble glimmer of the lamps showed them less confusedly, he marked the lumbering walk of the man. He wore a round soft hat, and a big overcoat against the freshness of the night air, and had the air of a familiar upper servant. At his side, with an upright gait and a certain poise of the head that Fersen knew, alas! for him, better than anything else on earth, went the woman. Fersen went forward, mastering his respect, and led them to the carriage; and then, without delay, but still careful to give no cause for remark by his haste, he drove northward over the loud granite sets of the streets.

By what tortuous ways Fersen drove the king and his family one may hardly guess. They were puzzled to find him following many street turnings other than those that would lead them to the nearest gate of the city on the north and so to the great frontier road. But Fersen did what he did knowingly. It was his business in this turn of the night

to make sure that the last point of his plan had been obeyed and that the great traveling-carriage had gone on before and was waiting for them outside the limits of the city. He called at the stables and found one trusted servant of his to assure him that the thing had been sent and that all was ready. Then only did he turn toward the east and the north and make for the barrier at the end of the rue St. Martin, which was then the gate of Paris and the beginning of straggling houses and the open country.

They did not reach that barrier till two o'clock, and already they breathed some faint air of morning. No one challenged them. It was one cab like another, driving to the suburbs with some belated middle-class party that had dined in Paris that night. There were lights and music still in the house of the gate-keeper at the barrier, for there had been a wedding in his family that day, and they were feasting. After the glare of that light, Fersen looked in vain through the darkness for the berlin. Then, with some few minutes so lost, he saw the black hump at last drawn up well to the right and close to the bordering ditch. The

guardsman, Moustier, and Balthazar, his own coachman, were sitting their horses immovable. They had waited thus immovable for some hours through the night. Very rapidly the travelers passed from the cab to the traveling-coach, and leaned back in the comfortable white velvet cushions of its upholstering. Fersen himself, sending back the cab I know not how, took his place upon the broad box of the berlin, and the four horses felt the traces and started. The journey had begun.

Toward the northeast, to which the great road ran, there was already a hint of dawn, and great Paris just behind would not sleep long into the light. Therefore the horses, Fersen's own, with only a short stage before them, were urged to a vigorous pace through the short, lonely suburb and still more lonely fields beyond, and Fersen's coachman, who rode as postilion upon the leader, spared them little.

It was near three o'clock when they reached the first posting-house at Bondy, three miles from the boundary of the city, and just outside the wall and railings of the park in that place. The guardsman Valory, who was outrider, had been there for an

hour; the six horses for the carriage were awaiting it, and the two horses which he and the third guardsman, Malden, were to ride to the next stage. As they unharnessed Fersen's steaming beasts, Fersen himself, as coachman coming down from the box, waited a moment until the fresh team was in and the postilions mounted. Then he looked in at the window of the coach, and taking off his hat to the queen, he said, "Good-by, Madame de Korff," and under the growing light would no longer linger. He was off at once by the by-lane to the Brussels road beyond. He and those whom he had so worked to save were to meet at Montmédy.

The postilions urged on their mounts, the short whips cracked, and they were gone. Fersen saw the great mass go swaying up the road, dark against the growing dawn, and went off lonely upon his separate flight to the north.

As for the travelers, touched by that effect of morning which all feel, by the unnatural exhilaration of those strained hours of no sleep, and of a release apparently begun, they broke into making plans for their disguise, reassuring themselves with every mile that passed and feeling the first sense of



MADAME ELISABETH

From a photograph by Braun, Clément & Co., New York, of a painting by Mme. Vigée Lebrun, in the possession of Mme. la Marquise du Blaisdel

relief that they had known for two strained years. The sleepy little boy who was their fortune and the heir was set more comfortably back against the white cushions in his girl's clothes that he might rest. The five others, wakeful and eager, pretended to learn their rôles. Mme. de Tourzel was to be the mistress; the queen, the governess Rochet; the Princess Elizabeth, a companion; and the king a steward under the name of Durand. There was almost a spirit of comedy in the coach. The king talked of his new liberty and of riding, perhaps of the autumn hunting that he loved; and they conversed also of the nature of their journey, where—and upon this perhaps they were more guarded—there might be peril, especially as they passed through the one considerable town of Châlons; but also of how, not two hours beyond that place, at Somme-Vesle, a posting-house in the midst of Champagne, they would meet the first troop of their chain-mounted escorts thrust out from the army, and how with these they would henceforward be safe.

They were late. They were already a full hour behind the time-table that men who understood the

essentials of order as the king had never understood them had laid down for their guidance. But the pace was brisk, the road was passing swiftly by, and the accident of such trifling unpunctuality so early in their adventure did not oppress them. There was no one with them accustomed to command or to understand the all-importance of exactitude in any military affair.

That little company, if we think of it, was an isolated thing and most imperfect for such a task: three women bred to a court and to the habits of leisure or of successive pleasures; two children; the unwilled, heavy king and husband, who never did or could decide, and whose judgment was slow to the point of disease. Beyond these were only the three guardsmen, almost servants.

At Claye, the next relay, they found the queen's two waiting-women, who, abandoned for hours, had awaited them in their chaise, and were bewildered, wondering if they were lost. From Claye onward, the sun having now risen, though hidden behind the level roof of clouds, and the day fully begun, they passed through fields without villages, with scarcely a house, where the peasants in the eager work of the

high summer were already abroad. The fourfold rank of great trees which dignified the road went by in monotonous procession. The quick change of horses at Meaux raised their hopes still higher, and as they opened their picnic-bags, bringing out bread and meat and wine to break their fast, they spoke in jests, increasingly secure. To Malden riding by the carriage door, the queen beckoned, and offered wine and food, and she told him familiarly of how the king had laughed roundly, saying that Lafayette, the master of the militia in Paris, and officially the guardian of the court, would be woundily puzzled that day. So much for that fresh early morning when all was well.

The wide royal road, full of the Roman inheritance, breasts beyond Meaux a sharp, high, wooded hill, and the drag up that hill was long; upon its farther side, on to the Marne again, goes a sharp pitch down which the shrieking brakes betrayed an equal delay. It was fully eight o'clock when they had come along the riverside to the lovely valley of the Sellot, winding between its wooded guardian hills to join the greater river.

There two roads part, each leading equally to

Châlons and to the east; the main one still follows the Marne, but the second, somewhat shorter, cuts across the plateau to the south of the river, which few, even in the traveling of to-day, know, and which those who had planned the flight had chosen on account of its few towns and villages and less frequented inns. Yet it was precisely in this chosen stretch of thirty miles, by this less-frequented lower road to Châlons, that their evil was to come upon them.

The hour's delay which one accident and another —the lateness of the moment in which the last of the court had left the palace, the slight time lost in peering for the berlin through the darkness at the gate, the long drag up and down the forest of Meaux—had burdened them with, was now perhaps more nearly grown to an hour and a half; but not one of that little company could guess how much this meant, or how such errors breed of themselves and add, how one strained and anxious man, watching during that Tuesday at the head of a little troop of horse in the lonely plains beyond Châlons, would be broken, and with him all their fortunes, by such incapacity. For save where it



THE END OF THE FLIGHT OF THE ROYAL FAMILY AT VARENNES

walked the hills, as heavy coaches must, the berlin went bravely enough, covering its eight miles an hour or more; and the sense of speed made up with them for the realities of time and of coördinated distance wherein they were incompetent indeed.

Nor was that error, that growing error in exactitude, all that they had to face.

THE PURSUIT

It was perhaps eight o'clock in Paris, at the most half an hour later, that the whole populace was alive to what had happened. The drums were beating, rallying the militia, the crowd was filling the square in front of the palace. At that moment when strong action in pursuit of the fugitives could not be long delayed, they were only just upon this upland road leaving the Marne; they had a start of, say, forty-five miles, fifty at the most, before the first rider could surely mount and be galloping in pursuit. The carriage rolled on fairly with Valory, its outrider, on before, Malden trotting at the door, and the chaise with the queen's two waiting-women in a cloud of dust behind. It rolled on eastward through that high, little-known land of

wide, hedgeless fields; it was about ten o'clock when it came down into a sort of shallow cup lower than the plain, wherein lies that little place called "Old Houses"—Viels-Maisons. Very few men, I think, of those who travel or speak of their travels know the tiny group of roofs. It has not thirty families round its church, it meant to the travelers nothing but an insignificant posting-house and a relay; but it was there that their fate first touched them, for there a chance postilion, one called Picard, glanced at the faces, and knew them for the king and queen.

Like so many upon that full and dreadful day, he yielded entirely to caution. The king was still the king. There was divided authority in France, and whether reward or punishment would follow any act no man could tell on such a day as this until it was known which of the two combatants, the crown or the parliament, would rule at last. So Picard said nothing; but he had seen. Others also were to prove discreet, but a little less discreet than he.

The coach went on through the lonely land, past one small town, Montmirail, which later Napoleon's resistance was to render famous, and on again into

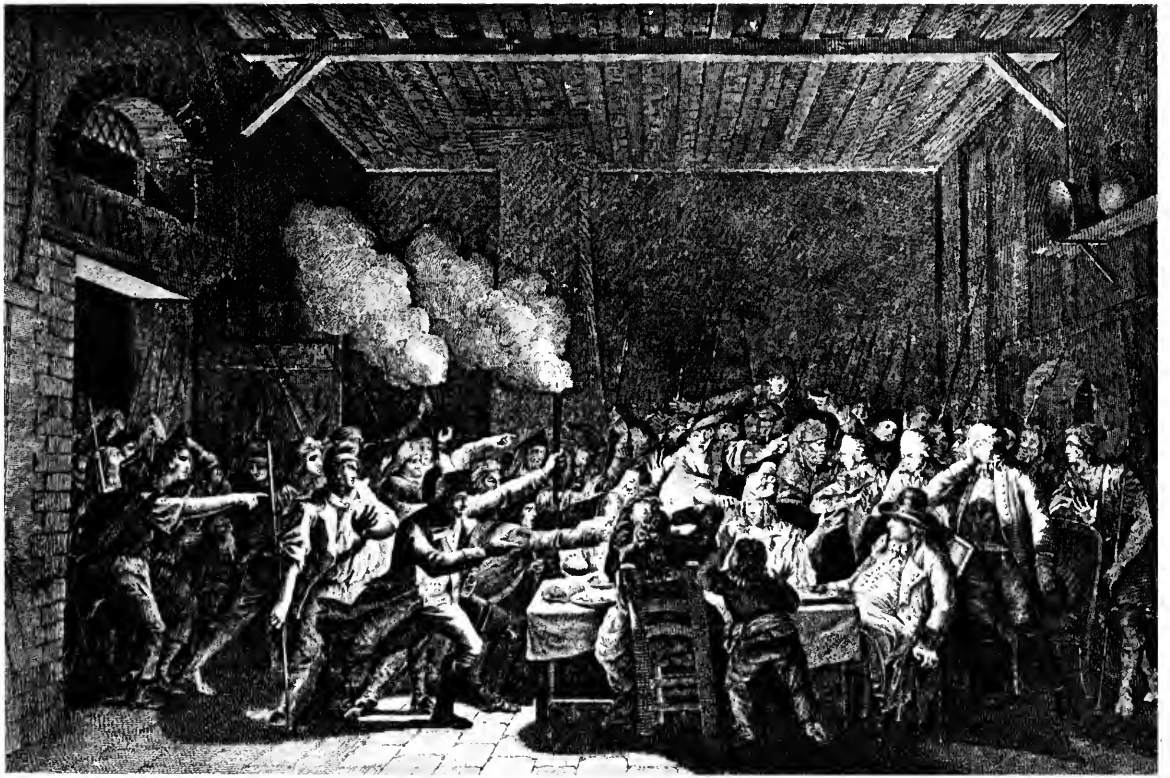
the empty fields, still eastward. It grew to be noon, hot and almost stormy under the lowering sky. Louis the King, with his road-book spread upon his knee, followed with curiously detached interest the correspondence of the map with the dull landscape outside. As the carriage stopped at one posting-house after another, and as he would plunge his hand into his leather money-bag to give his guardsman the wages of the postilions, he was not content thus to show his face at the window, he would even stretch his legs a bit and get down from the carriage to pace to and fro while each fresh team was harnessing.

"We are safe now," he said; and again, "There is no fear of our being recognized now." All the air of that little company had come to be one of security, though one man had already marked them down, and already the galloping out in pursuit from the gates of Paris had begun.

The governess and the royal children caught that air of security, and where a long hill put the horses at a walk, they got out and climbed it on foot. There was only one small incident of which to this day we cannot tell whether it was of any moment

or not. The little princess had noted it and had been disturbed. It was the presence of a traveler who for a time rode alone upon his horse behind them, walking when they walked, trotting when they trotted. It may have been no more than the coincidence that his way lay with theirs. Long before Châlons he had turned off by a by-road and disappeared.

There is, making a sort of western wall for the Champagne country, a very sharp and even range of hills running north and south. These are the escarpment of that plateau of which I have just spoken, and through which for many hours the coach had been traveling on. They end abruptly to the south, but just beyond the precipitous slope in which they terminate there stands across a narrow, clean-cut valley one isolated hill called the Mont Aimé; so that the gap is a sort of gate into the flat country below, which stretches eastward in a wide, rolling, chalky plain, the lower Champagne, of which Châlons is the capital and center. Beyond that plain another low, sharp line of hills, the Forest of the Argonne, marks the very distant horizon.



THE ROYAL FAMILY AT VARENNES, JUNE 22, 1791

Through this gate, which is a landmark for miles throughout the plain, passes the road; and half an hour beyond, or a little more, where the road crosses the small water of the Soude, three or four houses round one posting-house, by name Chaintrix, break the monotony of the fields. The travelers reached it just in the sultriest part of the day. They had not greatly added to their error in time; they were not much, if at all, behind the hour and a half of debt against fate which they had already suffered to accumulate when fate touched them again, but this time with a stronger gesture than when, four hours before, the postboy at Viels-Maisons had looked askance and known them for what they were.

Here lived one Lagny with certain married and unmarried daughters, and with him, by just one coincidence, his son-in-law from miles away, Vallet by name, who for that one day was there. That son-in-law had been to Paris the year before for the Revolutionary feast upon the Champ-de-Mars. He had there stared at the king, and when the berlin stopped at his father-in-law's door, and while yet the relay was waiting, he recognized his sover-

eign. Now it happened—so the doom of the king willed it—that all the small household, father and daughter and son-in-law, were Royalists of the old kind. They made obeisance openly; the king and the queen accepted that homage with delight, and at parting gave them gifts, which still remain in testimony to the truth of this tale. Vallet insisted upon driving them himself,—with what consequences we shall see,—and what was more, this spontaneous little scene of enthusiasm added by some few minutes again—perhaps a quarter, perhaps half an hour—to the delay. The royal children had gone in to rest a little from the heat and from their fatigue. When they came out and the coach started, the postmaster and his daughters openly acknowledged their hosts before the servants of the farm and the postboys around.

Vallet himself rode upon the leaders—they whipped off before three—proud to be driving his king and filled with zeal. But his zeal was indiscreet. Twice he let the horses fall. Once his off wheel caught the parapet of a bridge. At least twice the traces broke, and time, now so heavily

against them, turned still more heavily against them in the necessity of finding ropes and of mending. There must have been one more hour lost somewhere in that stage of the road.

When somewhat after four o'clock the fugitives clattered into Châlons, the whole matter was public knowledge. Whether Vallet had spoken, or whether the news shouted across the fields had been carried by some galloper, or in whatever other way it spread, many knew it while the two carriages were halted for the next relay in the town. The little knot that gathered round the carriage knew what they were gazing at; the bolder among them murmured thanks that the king had escaped his enemies. The postmaster of Châlons knew it, the mayor knew it, and many others whose names have not been preserved, but whose attitudes and words have. None would take upon himself any responsibility in the great quarrel, and only one obscure threat reached their ears. An unknown man did say in a low voice one thing which has been recorded: at least we have it at second hand, but at good second hand, that the travelers heard during

a halt a passer-by cry to them that their plans had miscarried and that sooner or later they would be held.

But this general recognition at Châlons disturbed them not at all. They were now not only secure in mind, as they had been for many hours, but also within touch of certain and physical security. For at the very next relay, not two hours along the road, was not the first of those armed posts of escort waiting for them, to surround them, to form a rear-guard, which should forbid all pursuit, to roll up further posts as the carriage still went eastward, and to form at last a whole body of cavalry, leading them on to the main army beyond Varennes? At that town, not fifty miles on, was the limit beyond which lay stationed in great numbers the army of Bouillé, the general privy to the plot and ready to do all things for the king.

Here, if we are to seize the last act of this disaster, we must have some picture of the scene in which it was played.

The lower Champagne, "The Champagne of the Dust," as the peasants call it, heaves in wide, low billows that barely disturb the vast sameness of its



DROUET, THE POSTMASTER AT VARENNES

flat until the Argonne, its limit and its wall, is reached to the east. With the Argonne are great trees again, and lively waters, and the recovery of rich land.

That countryside of the "Champagne Pouilleuse" is strange; it has remained for centuries thus empty to the sky, land often too poor for the plow, everywhere hungry and half deserted. The sluggish streams that make their way slowly through its shallow depressions are milk-white with the worthless chalky soil, and though now too regular plantations of stunted pines diversify it, planted in the hope of reclamation, it is of its nature a country without trees, as almost without men. Small, scattered villages hold its few people, and again and again one comes to patches as great as a rich man's estate that are left untilled and have lost almost all feature save the records of past wars. For here has been a great battle-field for ages. Across its flat one may still trace the lines of the Roman military roads. Here the French have made their chief modern ranges for the training of their gunners. Here Attila was broken in his great defeat, and you may see his enormous oval camp still stand-

ing, so large that it looks like the ruin of a town in the midst of the plain. Here also in the very next year that followed the flight of the king were to meet for the first time the armies of the Revolution and of Europe, and from these poor fields were to retreat the forces of the invasion, which did not return until, after twenty-two years, the republic and Napoleon had transformed the world.

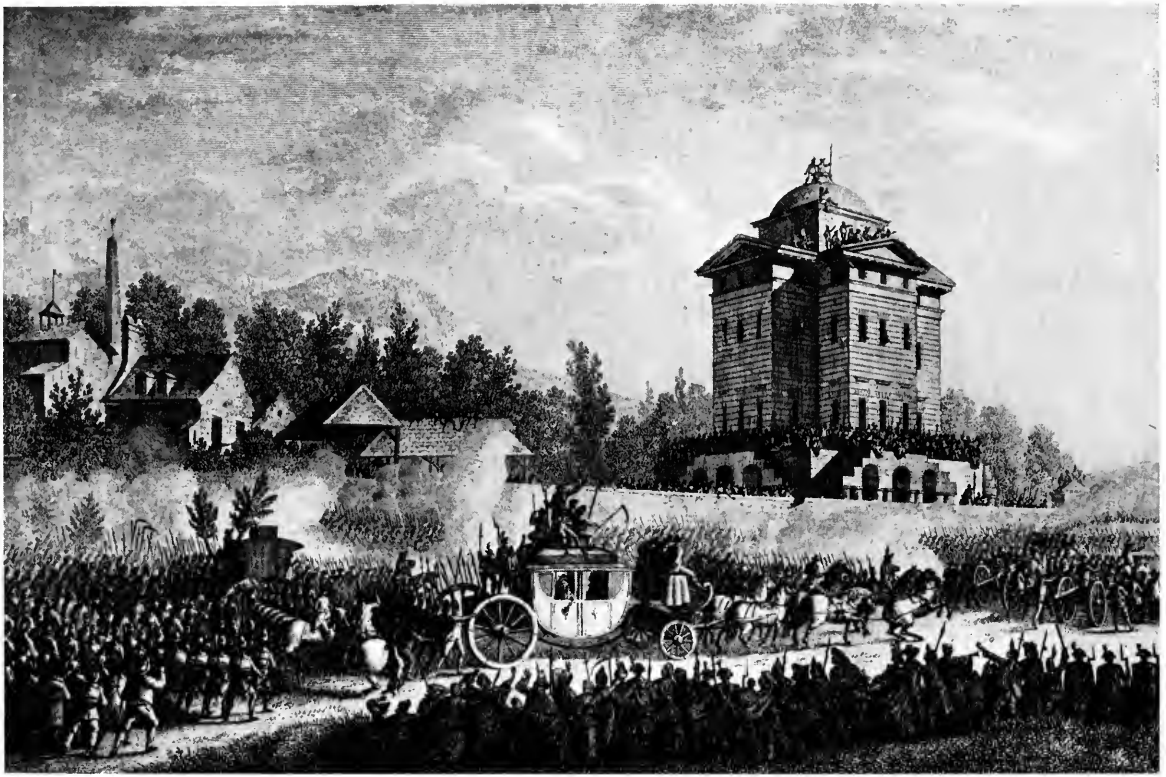
Right across the sweep drives the great road from Châlons, twenty-five miles, till it strikes at Sainte-Menehould, a country town at the foot of the Argonne. Only two relays break this long day's stretch, Somme-Vesle and Orbeval, each an isolated farm and standing in one of those slightly depressed muddy-watered dips to which the road falls, and from which it as slightly rises again in its eastward progress across the plain. And there at Somme-Vesle, at the Châlons end of the stretch, barely ten miles away, should be the first cavalry awaiting them, Choiseul's troop.

It was in the hours between half-past four and six that the berlin was passing through this stage. That hour and a half of debt to fate which the loyalty of Lagny at Chaintrix had increased perhaps

to two, the avoidable accidents under Vallet's posting had stretched to nearly three.

Young Choiseul, the duke, had come in to Somme-Vesle. He had his orders to expect somewhat after noon at the earliest, at the latest by three, the carriage which held his master and the queen. His exact time-table said one, and at one that carriage had not yet reached Chaintrix! The officer was mounted, and his troop of forty also—forty German mercenaries esteemed more trustworthy in such a task than any troops of the nation. From one till two they still sat their horses, waiting in the road before the posting-house, with the width of the Champagne all about. A strange sight to see so considerable an escort thus gathered, waiting for they would not say what. But here again, so oddly fast did the news travel, one man knew. As the afternoon wore on, and men sent riding up to the crest of the rise could see nothing coming up the road, the postmaster, as though to make conversation, strolled up to one man in subordinate command and said, "It seems that the king is to pass this way." He was answered neither yes nor no.

Peasants came in from the fields; a little knot of men gathered; rumors went about. In those days all the French had evil words for the foreign mercenaries in the army. Some of the more ignorant of the field-workers began whispering that they were a press-gang, that they had come to seize men for the service; the better instructed were far more suspicious of something far more probable. Three o'clock passed, and there began to be some pressure upon the mounted men. A few were hustled; the gathering of peasants grew. Beyond all essentials was it essential thus far from any support to avoid a rumor of the truth, or at least the spreading of it, and any conflict between his little line of Germans and the gathering peasantry about. And in one of those agonies that soldiers always feel, whether the command be great or small, when synchrony fails and when they are waiting hopelessly for something that never comes, torn as soldiers always are in such delays between two necessities, Choiseul, as the afternoon still drew on and the road for miles still showed quite empty, decided for the more immediate duty. A little longer, and his troop would have suffered assault, and the king, if



THE RETURN TO PARIS

after such inexplicable delay he did come at all, would come to find a country-side beginning to rise and his chances ruined.

But was the king coming? How often had not Choiseul been told of the perils, of the necessities, of the last moment, of the repeated postponements! How well did he not know himself, he who had left Paris as a forerunner just before, and who had a good eye for the faults of the court! Hour after hour had passed; the king could not be coming, and to linger longer with his little German troop was in any case to insure failure. He would ride away with his men across Argonne and join the main body at Varennes. He would not further rouse the growing talk of the fields by swelling the contingents to the east with his own, and by showing more soldiers than need be along the road. He would cut across the plain and through the woods. He rode away, and his men after him.

As the horses drawing the berlin topped the slight rise which hides from that approach the posting-house of Somme-Vesle, and as the flat dip, with the steading and the long wall of the courtyard, appeared before the travelers, the king from the

window, the guardsmen riding at the side, saw in one moment a sudden nothingness, which struck them as though the whole of their chances had turned. Lounging before the gate of the stables were the few hostlers and servants of the place. Of the soldiers in their blue and white, and of their mounts, not a sign. It was inexplicable, but it spoke loudly. And the emptiness of Champagne became in that unexpected shock far emptier than before. The travelers did not speak to one another; they did not even press the relay. For the first time that day a sense of dread was growing in them. They went on under the evening.

For it was now already evening. The reddening sun broke for a moment through a rift in the western clouds; it shone upon tumbled, white fields, bare or with a meager harvest, and, upon its ridge to the left, on the mill which was to be lifted into such fame in fourteen months under the name of Valmy: they were crossing that battle-field.

One more halt, one more relay under the failing light, and the hoofs of the horses rang over the paving of Sainte-Menehould with the high woods of Argonne right before them. And as they came

through the evening street, with all the people out to enjoy the new coolness of the air, that town more than any other they had yet passed knew thoroughly what was toward.

Gossip of it had been passing in the inns for hours. The post of hussars there waiting had angered men, but had been also too well explained, and their captain, as the coach waited for its horses, forgot the official secret and saluted when those within beckoned him to hear the news. Drouet, the son of the postmaster, himself now acting as postmaster of the place, sullenly ordered the harnessing, looking ill-naturedly at the huge, yellow thing, with its heaped luggage and tarpaulin atop, and telling his men in that hill country to spare the beasts. It was perhaps a close thing whether, amid the growing suspicion and anger of the place, one and then another and then a third passing the news, and all aflame against the foreign mercenaries set there for a guard, the coach would be allowed to start at all.

But the same fear and doubt of consequences held them here at Sainte-Menehould as it had held the much smaller number who had gradually heard the

truth far up the road hours before. And the travelers began their climb under the falling night up into Argonne. One more relay in the darkness at Clermont, where the road to Montmédy branched off from that to Metz, and they were upon the last stage to Varennes and to safety.

But when they were gone, when they had thus been hardly allowed to go, the captain of the little troop of cavalry, sounding boots and saddles, lit the flame. The militia were summoned by drummers throughout the streets, the German soldiers, mutinous with hunger after their long wait and supported in their mutiny by the town folk, failed to obey. The town council met, arrested, and examined the captain in command, and after one hour of increasing vehemence this decision was taken, which changed the story of France and of the world, "That the fugitives should be followed and detained." And the two men chosen for this task of life or death—for should they fail, it was certainly death upon the return of the armies—were Drouet, the young postmaster, and Guillaume, both ex-cavalrymen and both men knowing, as they had



THE ARRIVAL OF THE ROYAL FAMILY IN PARIS, JUNE 25, 1791

need to know, the darkness of Argonne that night. Both were men of great courage.

The odds against them were heavy. Of eighteen miles their quarry had a start of seven. Further, they thought, as did all to whom the plan had not been given, that the king's flight would be by the main Metz road. They knew nothing of his goal at Montmédy and of the turn-up toward Varennes which he would take at Clermont. They did not know that Varennes meant for him safety and for themselves immediate defeat.

They rode furiously up the road, and as they neared Clermont, nine miles on, having found in all those nine miles no sign of lights before them, in the pass where the great woods come close on each side and through which the road, the railway, and the stream run side by side to-day, Drouet heard voices in the darkness. He knew them for his own servants.

He learned in one breathless question and answer that the coach had turned off the Metz road after the relay down toward the north and Varennes. He had to decide in the thick darkness, and at once,

between following by the highway and cutting through the woods. He had the soldier in him, and he decided. He would take the chance of the woods, though he had eleven miles to go, and only an hour to ride in. If he did merit anything of fate, he would come in ahead of his prey; and if he failed, he failed.

He took the steep bank up into the trees with Guillaume, and though the two men knew the woods well, it was miraculous that they could thus gallop through a clouded night, through paths which I, who have followed them in full day, found tortuous and confused and often overgrown. He came down with his companion into Varennes town by the lane that leads from the forest above. It was asleep save for one light where men were sitting drinking. The hour was just on eleven. They could not tell whether they had won or lost in that great race. But Drouet, full of immediate decision, roused here a house and there another, blocked the bridge that led eastward to the farther part of the town and out toward the army by dragging across it an empty wagon that lay by, and

then strode up the main street of the place to find whether he had lost or won.

He came upon the berlin suddenly under an arch that spanned the way from house to house, the big thing almost filling the arch, and its two round lamps, with their reflectors, shining like great eyes. He heard some altercation, and shrill above the other voices one woman's urging the postilions. They would consent to go only a few yards farther, to cross the river. And there was Bouillé's son and his men waiting for them. Drouet took the leader's reins and threw him back on his haunches. He had won the race.

What followed was the anticlimax and the despair: the mayor, roused and hesitating; the hussars drifting in; Choiseul and the rest, now powerless before an immense armed mob that had gathered under the new day; the gallopers from Paris; the slow, dreadful return under the heat; and the restoration of the crown to the palace, which was henceforward its prison.

PART THREE

THE STORMING OF THE TUILERIES

INTRODUCTION

After the failure of the flight of the royal family, it was evident to all men of foresight that the European governments, and in particular the government of the empire at the head of which were the brother and afterward the nephew of Marie Antoinette, would attempt to restrain the Revolution by force of arms. It was not equally apparent that matters would come to actual war, for many erroneously thought that the French would yield to the threat of foreign intervention. At the head of those who were guilty of this capital error was Marie Antoinette herself, who wrote to her brother in the autumn of that same year, 1791, suggesting that he should gather a large armed force upon the frontiers, and declaring that it should act as a menace and a police. She was thus principally responsible for what followed.

The winter passed with a false situation both within France and without. There was a desperate attempt to keep the king nominally in power, though all real authority had left him since his flight. This attempt was resisted by the mass of opinion, but was supported by nearly all the politicians, even the most radical. The foreign governments, meanwhile, grew more and more threatening, and Marie Antoinette kept up a secret correspondence with them. It became obvious as the spring of 1792 ap-

proached that if the foreign armies intervened, it would be not only to save the monarchy, but to crush the Revolution altogether. The queen betrayed French plans of war to the enemy. The emperor wrote a letter demanding certain things in his name that concerned French domestic politics alone. The result was that the French Revolutionary parliament made war in April, 1792. Prussia joined Austria in the coming campaign.

Luckily for France, the foreign preparations were very slow; the French forces were in a deplorable state, and the success of the foreign invaders hardly doubtful. Meanwhile it was more and more publicly known that the court welcomed the war as a probable or perhaps certain deliverance of the royal family by foreign arms. The Palace of the Tuileries in Paris was thus a sort of fortress wherein the executive,— that is, the king and the queen at his side, — still wholly in command of the French armies in theory, and largely in command of them in practice, could direct operations adverse to the national welfare.

The instinct of all the democratic leaders was in favor of taking the Tuileries by storm, as a foreign stronghold might be taken; but for this they had no forces save the militia, the regular forces near Paris being in the hands of the king. The turning of the scale was due to the arrival in Paris of armed bands from the provinces, chief among which were the companies from Marseilles. These, with the aid of the Parisian militia and the incompetence of the court, managed to storm the Tuileries upon the tenth of August, 1792, and thus put an end to the French monarchy.

PART THREE

THE STORMING OF THE TUILERIES

UPON Sunday, the twenty-ninth of July, 1792, in the late morning of that day, the broad road that flanks the River Seine above Paris was covered by a marching column of men. They were in number about five hundred. A few showed uniforms grotesque with dust and grease. The most part were in the clothes of their civil estate, a few workmen, many of the professions, not a few from the land. For the most part they went gaily enough, though without parade; but some were very weary, and a few halting pitiably, though all trudged on.

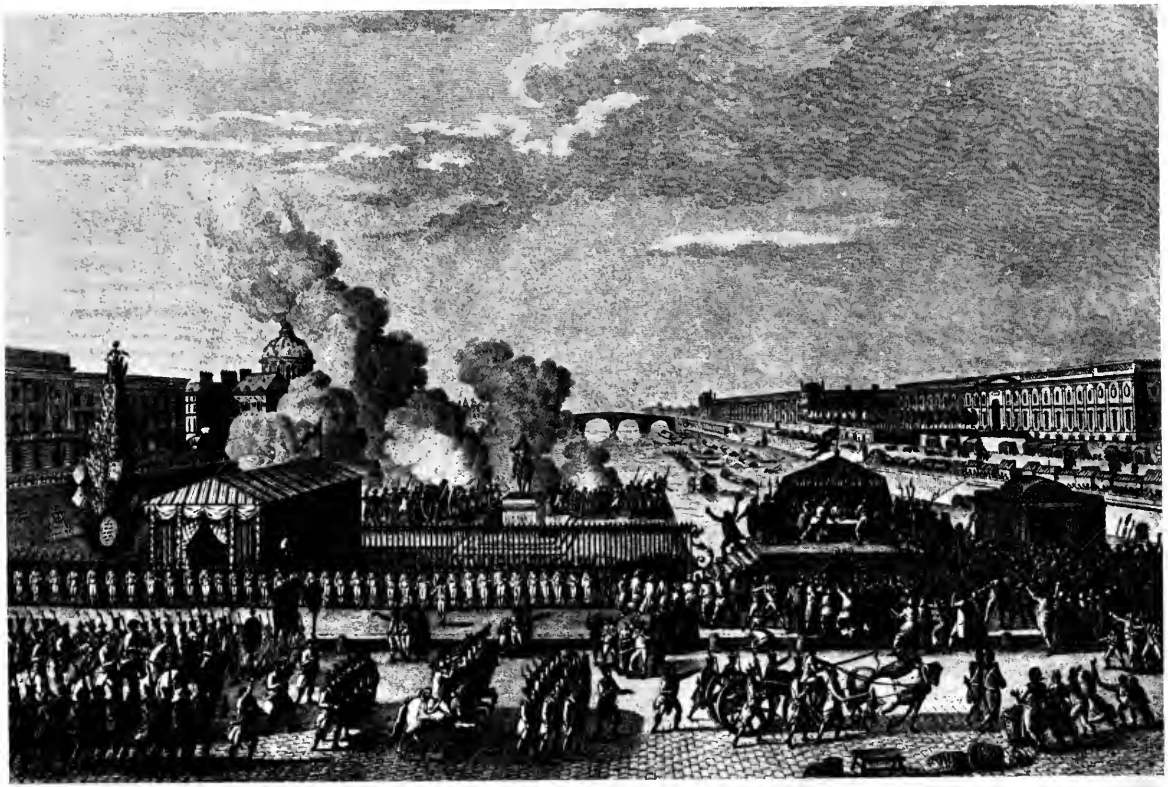
This column was that of "the men of Marseilles," and their tatters and their fatigue were the usury of five hundred miles of blazing road. They had been one month so marching, and behind them they still dragged two cannon—dragged them by leather lanyards, taking turns.

This last day of their famous raid was hot and cloudless. The sight of the river alone was cool, past the stubble of the baked harvested field; and the great road stretched on dusty hour after hour and league after league.

They had halted for the midday meal; the afternoon was already mellowing when they saw at last, far off in the north and west, the twin towers of the cathedral, the lifted dome of the university church upon the height to the left, the windmills upon Montmartre to the right, and between those low and distant hills the haze of Paris.

They formed somewhat before they reached the suburbs; they took some kind of rank, that their approach might be the more significant, and that they might hold their companies in the press of the poor from the eastern quarters that had come out in crowds to meet them under the sunset. They raised their famous song; they came in through the first houses to the noise of "La Marseillaise."

Before them other contingents, less famous, had reached the city for the Revolutionary feast. These had found the whole town alive with preparation for the struggle; for the war had now run



ENROLLING VOLUNTEERS IN PARIS ON THE PONT NEUF, BEFORE THE STATUE OF HENRY IV

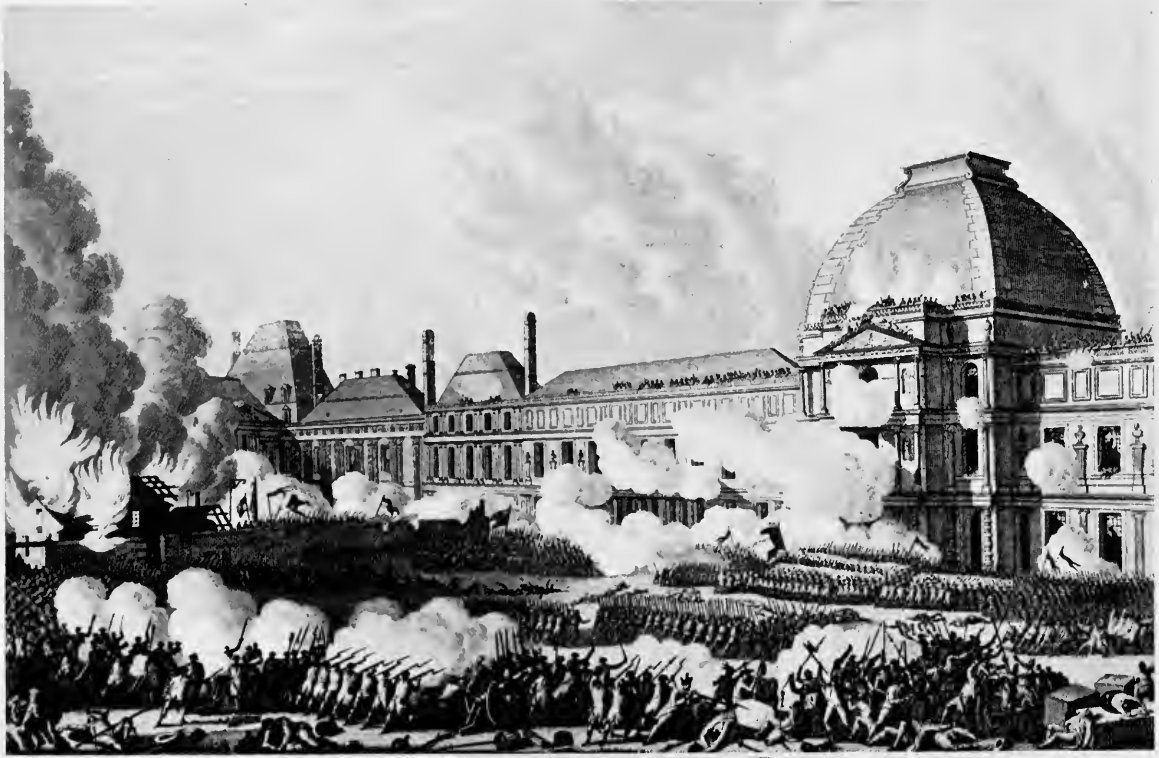
four months, or nearly four, and it was certain that the crown was betraying the people.

Upon the morrow this battalion from Marseilles came into the town through St. Anthony's Gate, through the main way dense with people, past the last foundation ruins of the Bastille. Their drums beat. They carried their colors before them. Their cannon, now cleaned and burnished, followed in their train.

In the center of Paris there stands, the most famous, perhaps, among the royal emblems of Europe, a great palace the construction of which is of every age, though its outward aspect is singularly united. It is the Louvre. This great place, more than a third of a mile in length, is in plan two courtyards. The larger of these, as large as a little town, and called the Carrousel, at the time of the Revolution was completed only upon one of its branches, and was closed toward the west by the mass of the Tuileries. Its one completed side was the southern one, that toward the river, called "the Long Gallery." From the end of this the Tuileries turned away from the river at right angles.

For more than forty years the charred walls of that building, burned in the Commune, have disappeared, and their place is taken now by an open garden. Only the two high, flanking pavilions which closed the north and the south of its long line still stand, each now forming one end of the completed great courtyard of the Louvre.

In 1792 the Tuileries had upon the Carrousel side, toward the palace of the Louvre, three smaller yards, walled and preserving its entrances from the public of the city. Beyond these again, and filling all the main Carrousel court of the Louvre, was a crowd of houses pierced by tortuous lanes, and in the midst of them a little chapel to St. Thomas of Canterbury. This mass of houses within the arms of the palace was, as it were, a little overflow of the town into the midst of the Louvre and its connected Tuileries. Through this built and crowded space traffic passed and repassed between the rue St. Honoré, to the north of the Louvre, and the river, running along its southern side. For under the Long Gallery of the Louvre, the only completed side of the great Carrousel court, arches were pierced, giving access to the quays.



THE STORMING OF THE TUILERIES

Behind the Tuileries to the west the gardens, which are now open to the town, and a part of it, were then private to the king. Overlooking them from the north, the great oval of the royal riding-school looked with its tall, mournful windows, and therein, upon benches roughly provided for the passing circumstance, sat the congress of the Revolution. Therein were heard the declamations that hurried on the storm, and in these hot days, when the western casements of the palace stood open at morning, the court within could hear the distant noise of the debates.

That court, with the heavy, lethargic king in the midst of it, still governed in this end of July, 1792. He was still the executive; from him and from those rooms there still proceeded all orders to the armies, all communications with the powers of Europe. A great pomp still surrounded these last hours of the French monarchy. Its ceremonial was still exactly preserved amid the gold, the heavy hangings, and all the splendor of the Bourbons. So long as that center stood and governed, so long as it betrayed (for it was certainly betraying) the nation in arms, that nation and the great experiment upon

which it had embarked were in peril or doomed. For from the Tuileries could go out not only open orders that presumed the defense of the frontiers and resistance to the coming invasion, but secret letters also, very contradictory of these; and one such had gone in those very days in menace of the French people. The queen's letter was an appeal for proclamation to be issued by the invaders, a manifesto threatening with military execution whatever men or cities might either arrest the foreign armies or insult the shaken and tottering throne of her husband.

The Tuileries, then, thus standing in the midst of Paris, and of Paris armed in militia bodies, swollen with these Revolutionary volunteers from the provinces, was morally a sort of fortress, isolated and held, standing for the enemy in the very heart of the national capital. It must hold out till the invader came, or, if it fell, carry with it the crown.

The Tuileries was not only morally a fortress; it was in some measure an effective fortress as well. A regular force, the royal guard of Swiss mercenaries, was available for its defense; it had cannon, and save against cannon the great building

was strong; it expected and received drafts of volunteers of its own that would support the king and could be armed; it possessed good reserves of ammunition; a minority, but a considerable minority, of the wealthier militia in the city, promised a reinforcement. It would have a garrison of some six thousand men if an assault came.

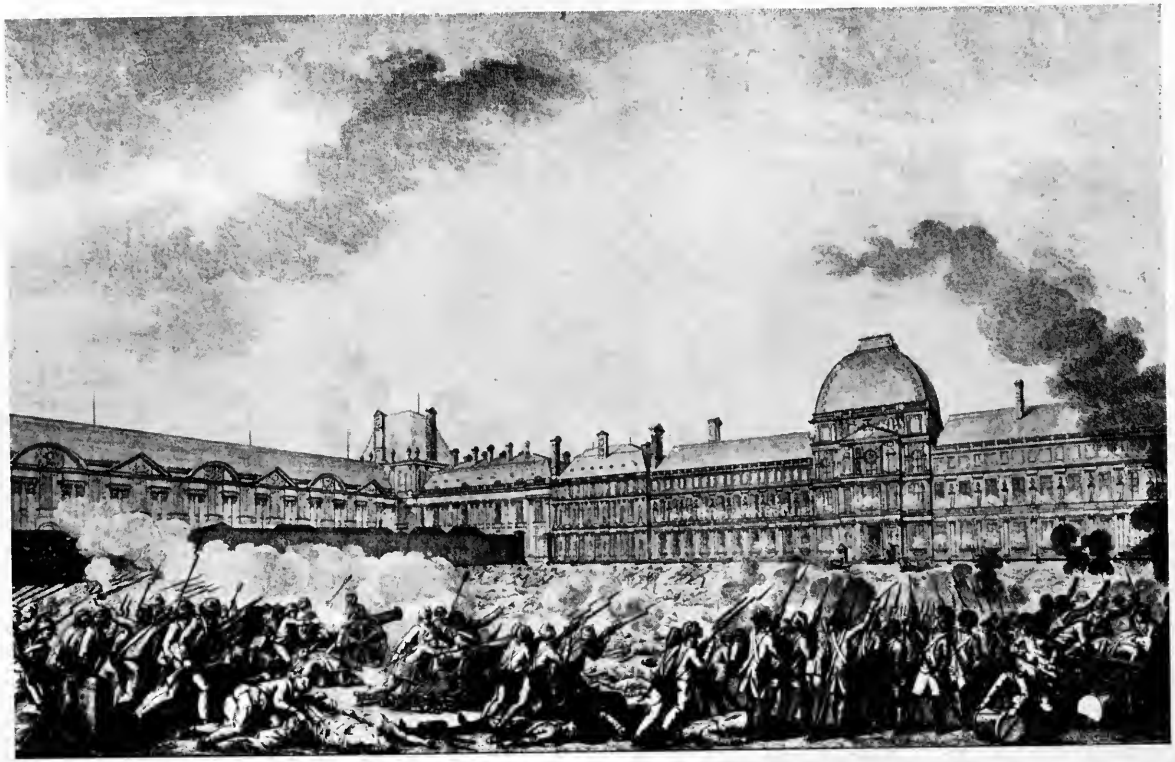
The very position of the palace strongly aided its defense. The garden behind was well protected; no street flanked it, as the rue de Rivoli does to-day, but all along the north were houses, the narrow passages through which could easily be held. Upon the south it reposed upon the river, with only the quays between.

If the place was to be taken at all, it could be taken only from the east, the Louvre side; and not from there, it would seem, against any sustained musket-fire from the windows, still less against cannon stationed in the three walled inclosures that stood out before it toward the great courtyard of the Carrousel.

The sultry days with which that August opened were days of a curious hesitation. The invaders,

massed under the Duke of Brunswick, beyond the German frontiers, were in column, marching up the Moselle Valley. They had not yet crossed those borders. The secret messages to the enemy, the negotiations between them and the treasonable crown, were still proceeding. The armed militia of Paris, or that majority of it which was ready to act for the Revolution and against the king, drilled, but did not yet move. There was a silence, as it were, or at the most a murmur, throughout the million populace and over all the plain that holds Paris. Quarrels arose, indeed, violent enough, and blows were exchanged, especially where the volunteer contingents from the provinces were feasted. Already by that end of July the news of what the invaders intended was abroad. Their proclamation, which the queen had inspired, was on all men's lips, copies of it, printed, had come in from the frontiers. It still suited the crown to pretend that it had not heard of that insult which it had itself drafted.

By the third of August the pretense could be kept up no longer, and on that day the king communicated to the congress in the riding-school, to



THE ASSAULT ON THE TUILERIES

the National Assembly, the amazing terms of the challenge. If the French would not undo all their Revolutionary work, if they met the invasion of the country by resistance, if they menaced the person of the court and in particular the king and his family, all so acting were punishable by death, in particular all public officers and magistrates that should so attempt to defend the cause of the nation. As for Paris, if it moved, Paris was to be destroyed.

There is a temper in the French by which everything is restrained in them until they act. It is a temper of rapid accumulation before the moment of decision. During the week that followed, this temper was discoverable throughout the city, very significant to certain captains of the people and in particular to Danton; very much misunderstood by foreigners who have left us their records, and by not a few of the court and of the wealthier quarters of the town.

As though each party to this coming and decisive grappling was instinctively aware of some known trysting-day, the week proceeded under its increasing heat with orders upon each side, with the serving out of ball-cartridge, with the rations of powder for

the same, with the sending of directions where men should gather, and where defense should be posted. Neither side yet moved; neither side was strong enough to prevent the preparations of the other. There was violent thunder, but the air was not cleared. The oppression of the sky still grew heavier as the moment of crisis drew near.

I have said that it was upon the third of August that the king had admitted to the assembly the manifesto of Brunswick which heralded the invasion. That day was a Friday. Exactly seven days separated it from the crash. Upon Sunday, the fifth, when the last royal mass was said publicly in the chapel of the Tuileries, whispers and open words among the public in the galleries were the last expressions of civil and unarmed resistance that the court was to hear. By Tuesday, the seventh, every man who was to support the crown had received his orders. Upon Wednesday the Swiss Guards, in their barracks to the west of the town, had the command to march upon the morrow, and on Thursday, the ninth, at evening they came marching in, no man opposing them, while during that same evening all those of the wealthier militia,



A SOLDIER OF THE NATIONAL GUARD GRENADIER OF THE INFANTRY OF LIGNÉ

At the Time of the French Revolution

or of private gentry, or of old servitors, that would garrison the palace and defend the crown, passed in through its doors.

Before night the court heard the hammering and the sawing of the carpenters in the Long Gallery of the Louvre. They were making a gap there in the flooring, lest the Tuileries should be turned from that end. With the fall of darkness they could also hear the rumbling wheels of cannon going to their posts and of wagons still distributing the arms and the munitions for the fight.

The night fell very dark and moonless, but open, in the stifling weather, to murky stars. From the higher windows of the Tuileries one could see in nearly all the houses around lights maintained at the windows of the citizens, for that night few slept. Amid so much terror and surmise, there was a grotesque suggestion of a city illuminated as for a gala-day.

Garrisoned within the palace there stood to arms squads of the volunteers along the first row of its eastern windows; the Swiss Guards were stationed with piled muskets in the three courts before it, and in the central hall up which the great marble stair-

way turned. The hours of the night went by. Midnight was passed, but nothing stirred.

It was a little before one o'clock when this general silence was shattered by one loud cannon-shot close at hand. For a moment it was thought that the popular forces were moving. It was not so. That cannon-shot was only a signal for the bells.

The bells began to ring in steeple after steeple, dome after dome, catching the call one from another athwart the dark town. First on the hill of the university; then by St. Anthony's Gate, where was the thickest of the Revolutionary gatherings; then, nearer, by the town hall; then from St. Martin's to the north; from the millennial rough tower of St. Germain to the south. For an hour or more the clamor of the bells filled Paris. But still there was no marching or any sound of arms, and from those high windows of the roof in the Tuileries, those attic windows where the watchers were, the streets lay empty below, under the dim oil-lamps that swung from cords across them and from the brighter light of the unsleeping houses.

From one of those same windows the queen, with certain of her women, watched through those hours



MARIE-ANTOINETTE AND HER CHILDREN
From a photograph by Braun, Clément & Co., New York, of a painting by Mme. Vigée Lebrun, in Museum of Versailles

of darkness. The stars began to pale, and along the uncertain east a band of dark cloud stood motionless in the somber sky, like a distant coast revealed by the dawn. Behind it at last the vivid color of a thunderous sunrise showed. The violent red overspread all the arch above them, and so touched the roofs of Paris that it seemed as though a great fire had come at last with the wars and had caught all the city. Marie Antoinette called her sister-in-law, the Princess Elizabeth, to her side, and the two women watched this thing together. It was a little past four o'clock. The day broadened, and at last the sun rose blinding, and still the silence endured. The bells had long ceased, and the more careless of those within the Tuileries jested one with another, saying, "The tocsin did not yield this night; it has run dry."

Before the sun had strength, and while yet the Tuileries cast a broad shadow westward over the garden terrace and toward the garden trees, while the streets were as yet still empty, the queen unwisely bethought her that something might be done at this last moment to lend strength and dignity to the resistance of the palace. She would summon

the king and bring the garrison out before him, so moving their loyalty and his too slow determination.

She went to find her husband. He had sunk into a torpor with the last hours of the night, and when she woke him from the place where he lay he started up disheveled and confused. His clothes suffered through the wearing of so many hours; his very wig was disturbed and askew. His face was suffused. But he came down at her asking, and stood before the main western garden door, while what could be gathered of the six thousand were hurriedly summoned there into line to meet him and to be passed in review. Not all of them came,—not all of them by very many,—and the thing was so haphazard that unarmed pages slipped into the line and played the fool, with chance irons to take the place of muskets when they saluted. The king, a figure not exciting loyalty on that breakfastless morning after that sleepless night, heavy in shoulder as in stomach, purple-coated, freckled and pale, walked up and down the motley line. It was an unhappy business, unworthy, undignified, the true product of an energetic woman's

misunderstanding of men. Just before the king turned to leave them, an old and devoted courtier went down on one rheumatic knee to offer his sword. There was a single laugh from somewhere. Louis turned and reëntered the palace.

By this time the Friday sun had risen high. It was between six and seven o'clock, and still the city did not move.

But there came to the queen—for it was she who was the soul of that defense—news full of omen. The regular government of the city, elective, popular, and resistant to the crown though it was, had not seemed strong enough for battle: it had fallen in the night, and in the town hall there were now in power men of some insurrectionary committee, the leaders of the revolt. The man chiefly responsible for the militia of the city, one who might have divided or checked its forces by his authority, had left the palace in the night to meet the authorities of the city. When he reached the town hall he had found there not the authorities of the city, but this new insurrectionary body, and as he left the place the mob without had murdered him. It was certain now that the attack could not be restrained.

Before the eastern front of the palace, cutting the great courtyard of the Louvre and shutting off the houses in it from the Tuileries, ran a high wooden paling, stretching from one lodge gate to another. Between that paling and the Tuileries itself detachments of the guard were waiting with muskets loaded, and sections of cannon with matches lit, prepared to discharge at the first menace of attack.

It was about eight o'clock when the head of a street boy who had hoisted himself up precariously from the farther side appeared above that paling's rim and disappeared again. Then one face, then another, as grotesquely, as impotently showed. Some stayed so long that it seemed as though their owners were standing upon the shoulders of companions. One or two of these larrikins threw stones. A guard leveled his musket, and all those faces popped down again. What a beginning for the catastrophe of a thousand years!

At an upper window of the palace Louis, the king, watched, looking eastward in his turn, and he and those about him heard a murmur coming from along the river quay—a murmur not loud, but



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LOUIS XVI
The Forge in the Palace at Versailles

wide-spread and deep and dull because there stood between it and the hearers the Long Gallery of the Louvre. It was the advance of the people, of their unformed vanguard, coming before the militia and the volunteers. In a moment that murmur turned to vivid, immediate, and neighboring sound, like the roar of water which has been heard approaching in a flume up a mountain-side and breaks suddenly outward from its issue over the washers: so the many thousands of the insurrectionary crowd burst through the arches under the Long Gallery, coming from the river quays into the Carrousel of the Louvre.

Every musket and every window was ready; all the fourteen guns of the palace were ready in rank before it. The great oaken gates of the palisade were burst asunder; the armed mob broke through, swelling in; and at that moment the first order was given in the palace to fire.

Instantly the signal rolled along the line, and all the windows blazed with flame. Range in those days was very short, windage very great, and few fell; but the assault was checked, and as it halted, two guns of the Swiss roared out together, and the

grape-shot swept down perhaps thirty men, opened a lane in the dark and shouting mass, and sent it pressing backward through the gates and the now opened rents in the palisade.

The Swiss, both those already before the palace and those coming out from within, formed by companies and charged. There were the shrieks and the trampling of a herd overcome by discipline,—the Swiss were perhaps a thousand all told,—and the whole place was cleared: the narrow and tortuous streets between the houses of the great Carrousel of the Louvre; and even, some say, the arches under the Long Gallery and the quays for some yards beyond.

It was not yet nine o'clock, and the palace seemed to be already saved.

There is no other town in Europe, and only two other peoples, the Irish and the Poles, of whom one could not say what many said in that moment of the town of Paris and of the French people, that their fate had been decided by this action of regulars against a mob. But Paris being Paris, and Gaul Gaul, and the French people having beyond any other the gift for rapid organization from be-

low and for corporate discipline, nothing was yet decided.

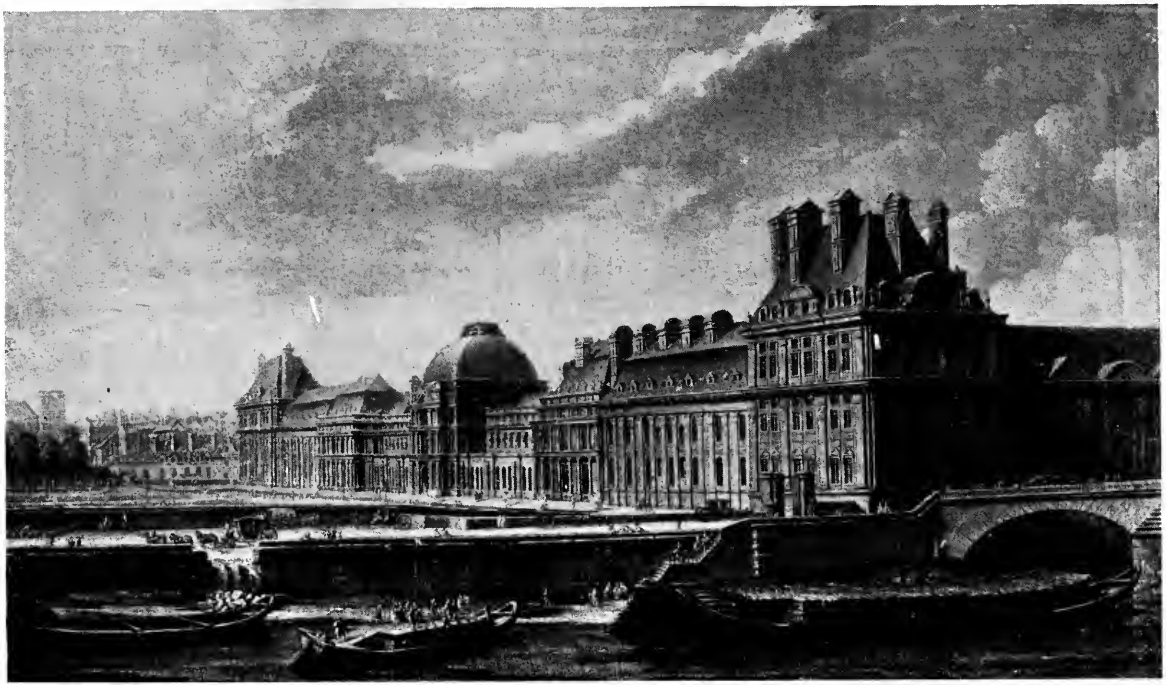
Even as the noise of the broken mob retreating died away, another new noise, more formidable, more regular, approached, and the watchers in the Tuileries heard it. It was not an army upon the march, but it was men determined and in some way ordered. It was the militia, it was the contingents from the provinces, and chief among them the volunteers from Marseilles, the five hundred with their guns.

The Swiss were back, ranged before the palace and in reserve in the central hall and by the great staircase. All the muskets were loaded again, though the affair was thought to be finished after that first brief and successful skirmish, when the sound of regular marching and the rumble of cannon-wheels were heard.

At his window, overlooking the still empty inclosures beneath him, stood Louis, heavy with insufficient sleep; by his side stood an official of the department, Roederer. The column of the attack came swinging through the arches which led from the river quay under the Long Gallery; their can-

non were ready, and their muskets charged. This time it was war.

While each armed body facing the other held its fire, awaiting the advantage gained by such reserve, —for in those days of short range, to let a trained troop opposing one fire first was to have a heavy advantage in the returning fire at close quarters, —Westermann, an Alsatian, Danton's friend, mounted upon a horse, rode out from the popular ranks to parley in their own tongue with these Swiss mercenaries, German in speech, like himself. One fired, I think,—so the best story goes,—and immediately a rapidly increasing, alternative rattle of individual shots broke out from the line of the windows, above from the militia and the volunteers below; and unexpectedly, the ranks opening to let them through, the two cannon from Marseilles gave tongue against the cannon of the guards. This time there was no breaking, and the more trained firing of the militia and the provincial volunteers permitted of no further charge from the guards. But the reciprocal attack began to fill the space before the palace with fallen men, neither side yet



THE TUILERIES AND ITS GARDEN IN 1757

proclaiming an advantage. The Swiss Guards still held the main door of the Tuileries; the fire from its long tiers of windows was still well nourished; the muskets in the hands of the half-trained populace were still regularly recharged, and held their own.

It was in this moment of doubt that Roederer, the politician who stood by the king at his eastern window, said to Louis that it was the duty of a monarch not to risk the state. "Look, Sire! A whole people are advancing! If the palace must fall, let it fall; but let the crown be saved." Louis looked dully out of that window, and thence he could see the Paris of the kings.

This place stretched back beyond the origins of religion into the roots of Rome; thirteen full hundred years of monarchy had sat therein. The huge pile of the Louvre, stretching out into the morning, was the story of Henry IV, of the Medicean woman before him, and of the Valois. The turrets upon the more distant island were the walls of St. Louis. Eudes, the son of Robert, the founder of all the royal line, had beaten the barbarian off just where

the slate pinnacles of the Châtelet pierced the sky half a mile away. Behind all these visible things were the ghosts of Clovis and of Charlemagne.

He turned to go. He went back through the palace to the western gardens, where the sound of the firing upon the eastern front was deadened by the mass of the palace between. His wife and his children were with him, and a few men of the guard. He crossed between the regular trees, his little boy, his heir, kicking the fallen leaves before him with his foot, and entering the riding-school, Louis took refuge with the parliament.

There stood that day upon the quays outside the southern end of the Tuileries a young man, a young man of twenty-three, a lieutenant of guns, Napoleon Bonaparte, on leave in Paris. He was alone. He had watched all that business curiously, a spectator. He had already some knowledge of what the soul is in men fighting. He has left his judgment upon record that had Louis not turned back that day "to save the monarchy," the monarchy would have been saved. He believed, and his judgment of arms is not negligible, that if the

king had shown himself even then in the open spaces before the palace and in danger, preferably upon a horse, that would have happened to the defense which would have saved it.

It was in the Long Gallery of the Louvre, where that arm of building joins the Tuileries, the weak point of the defense had been discovered. The young men of the populace, eager and curious, had flowed up the stairways of the Long Gallery and had found the flooring cut and a gap between them and the entry to the Tuileries. That gap they had fought for, conquered, leaped, and bridged with planks; and just as the defense of the palace against the frontal attack was holding its last desperate own before the great main portal, just as the Swiss themselves were wondering how long the pressure they suffered could be resisted, the upper floor of the Tuileries was enfiladed: the first contingents from the Long Gallery were beginning to shoot down and through those suites of rooms; the garrison was caught in flank and wavered.

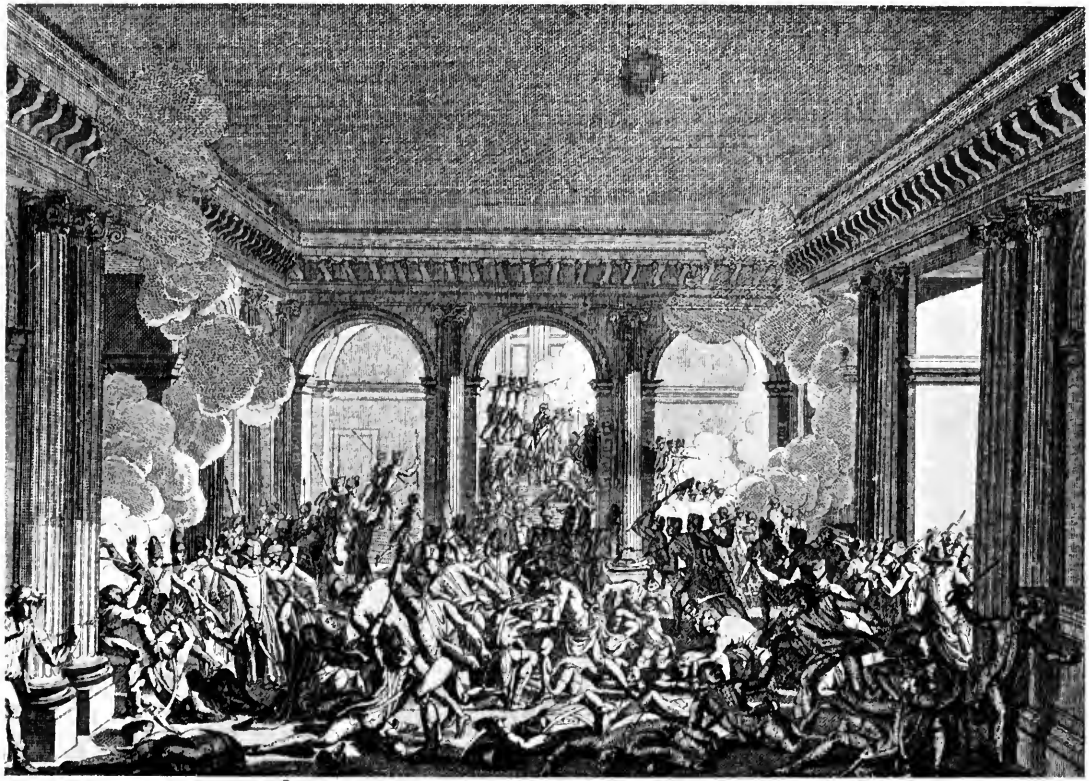
Hervilly, an officer commanding the Swiss Guards, in that desperate moment received half a sheet of paper folded in four. The curious may

peer at it to-day under glass in the Carnavalet in Paris. It was an order from the king to bid the guards cease fire and march out of the palace back to their barracks to the west of the town. That order had been sent from the place where Louis was in refuge, from the parliament in the riding-school. Hervilly read it. He put it in his pocket again. He still maintained the fire of the guards.

But it was too late. The Tuileries were pierced from the south: those that had found the entry by the Long Gallery called to others behind them; room after room was swept; hundred after hundred of the armed populace pressed through the gap, killing and cleaning out the defense.

As the fire from the palace windows was thus quenched, the attack from the open against the walls began to triumph; the main door was forced; the Swiss Guards were broken in the hall and upon the great marble staircase; their remnants were driven out backward through the western doors upon the Tuileries Gardens beyond.

There was no battle any more. The last shots died away as one hunted refugee after another, discharging his last desperate cartridge, was run down



THE STRUGGLE IN THE HALLS OF THE TUILERIES, AUGUST 10, 1792

with the bayonet, and at last all that sound of men in arms ceased and gave place to the muffled tumult rolling in the rooms of the palace, a looting and a scuffling, a rumbling sound upon the many stairs.

There chimed, heard through this new lull, the strokes of ten o'clock from the dial upon the garden front and from the church of St. Roch, hard by. In those two hours since eight all had been accomplished.

PART FOUR

UNDER THE MILL OF VALMY



CEREMONIAL COSTUME OF THE CLERGY, THE NOBILITY, AND THE COMMONS
The three Orders in the National Assembly

INTRODUCTION

While the popular forces were gathered in Paris for the assault on the palace, which eventually proved successful, the Prussian and Austrian army of invasion, under the command of the Duke of Brunswick, was marching against the French by the valley of the Moselle. It was accompanied by many of the French nobles who had emigrated, and who desired by any methods, even those of foreign invasion, the destruction of the Revolutionary movement. The frontier was not crossed until some days after the palace had fallen, but the invasion was immediately successful. The frontier fortress of Verdun fell. The French forces were largely composed of unreliable volunteers. The regulars themselves had been badly demoralized, and the French army under General Dumouriez, whose task it was to stop the invasion, lay upon the line of the Argonne, not a week's march from Paris, with very little hope of defending it successfully. But by one of the strangest accidents in history, when this army under Dumouriez had been successfully turned by the invaders and was in its most desperate plight, an action fought near the village of Valmy changed the whole story of Europe. The result of this action, which was in a tactical sense indecisive, and in which the opposing forces never came to close quarters, was that the invading army was checked in its

career, was ultimately bound to retire, and the Revolution had just the time it required to raise and discipline new forces to resist further invasions, which were bound to follow. This action at Valmy, which, despite its indecisive tactical quality, was one of capital importance in the history of the world, was fought almost coincidently with the declaration of the republic. On this same ground France and Germany to-day stand opposed.

PART FOUR

UNDER THE MILL OF VALMY

THERE is a country-side in western Europe upon which the fate of the world has twice been decided, the first time when Attila and his Asiatics were here broken by the forces of the Roman Empire; the second when the French Revolution was saved in the action I am about to describe.

This country-side is known to the French, within whose territory it lies, as the Champagne Pouilleuse. The Romans, from its capital, called it the Catalaunian Fields; for its capital is the town of Châlons upon the Marne.

The plain is of a peculiar nature, difficult to be seized by those who have not known it, but, once perceived, a thing not easily forgotten, so distinctive is it and so much apart from all that bounds it. In formation the soil is chalky, but not of that chalk which bears the green swards of Sussex or Nor-

mandy; not of that chalk over which the trout streams of Vexin or Hampshire run clear. It is a chalk kneaded, as it were, with clayey thickness, so that it bears only stunted trees or none, is sterile to the plow, and the waters which run sluggishly in the shallow dips of it are turbid, like milk and water mixed, and all their fords are muddy and difficult to pass. Those who drink of these waters and who live by them are few. It is an inhospitable land.

For the shape of it, it is of an odd, rolling, confused sort, which, in describing it, I have often compared, and shall here compare again, to the slightly lifted waves of a sea, rounded, and heaving indiscriminately, where currents meet, a day after a gale. You will find no direction or set of up and down in these billows. Standing upon the summit of any one, others are seen around you as low, as smooth, as untenanted as that one from which you gaze, and between you and them lie broad and slight depressions a mile or two across, and hardly deep enough to hide the sparse villages of those plains. Such is the Champagne Pouilleuse.

If a man stands upon any one of these slight rolls of hungry land, plowed desperately for insufficient



UNIFORMS OF THE ARMY OF FRENCH EMIGRANTS

harvest here and there, hedgeless, and almost featureless, and looks directly eastward toward Germany and the roads by which invasions come, he will perceive, running black and distinct all along the horizon, a low ridge, even enough in outline. If the weather is clear, he may perceive it to be wooded. It stands no more than three hundred feet above the average level of the plain, but it bounds it absolutely. This ridge is the range of hills that, with its forest, is called "the Argonne."

This ridge barring the main approach to Paris along the roads from the east, traversed in one steep pass by the main road which leads to Paris from the Germanies, Dumouriez held with his insufficient and patchwork forces, calling on Kellermann to bring up at all speed reinforcements from the south, and knowing well in his heart that even with those reinforcements he had not the quality of men who in the shock that was coming could withstand the famous discipline of the Prussians and the training of their Austrian allies. For Dumouriez, precise in temper, a soldier of the old strict armies, and one in very doubtful allegiance to the Revolutionary cause, justly doubting the temper of mere

volunteers, and misjudging what the future might make even of such undisciplined men, thought, if anything, too little of the material, bad as it was, which he had to his hand.

If the reader should wonder why a low ridge of this kind could prove an obstacle to the advance of armies, and should be thought even in so desperate a case worthy of defense, the explanation is this: armies depend for their very lives, and equally for their offensive power, upon a train of vehicles and guns. They are tied to roads. And such a feature as the Argonne, low though it be, dense with wood and undergrowth, and built of deep, damp clay, was almost as effectual a barrier to invasion as might be an equally broad arm of water. The few roads across it, cut through the woods and hardened, in particular the great Paris road from Germany, which crossed it at the point called "les Islettes," were like bridges or causeways over such an arm of water, and as necessary for the passage of any army as are bridges over water. To hold these passes, if it were possible, was all Dumouriez's plan. For Verdun had fallen in the first days of this month of September (1792), more than half

of which had now run in this week when Dumouriez lay along the hillside with his men, every pass guarded, and awaiting the shock.

That shock came in the form of direct assaults upon the roads across the hills, attempts to carry them with the high hand. These assaults at first failed. An enemy attempting thus to break some link in a chain of defense will make for the weakest. If Prussia and Austria were to cross the Argonne, it must be by that one of the four roads where the resistance was weakest. The direct road, the great Paris road, which was the southernmost of the four passages, they would not first attempt. They managed in their second effort to break the line at that point called "The Cross in the Woods," a day's march to the north. They lost but few men in this success. They gained their gate; Dumouriez's line was pierced. Hurriedly in the night he withdrew all those of his men who, lying to the north, would have been isolated had they waited for the dawn, and he fell back down the hills, standing now with his back to Germany, his face to Paris, and knowing that his position was turned. For though the Paris road was still held, the enemy was pouring

through the breach in the dike above, and the way to the capital was open for him round by that circuitous road.

All the weather of those few days had been drenching rain. The clay of the hills was sodden, the autumn leaves drifting upon it throughout the forest; the bare, rolling plains and the chalk were sodden with it, too. It was the nineteenth of September, and Kellermann, just in time by a few hours, but with reinforcements that could hardly save his country, had effected his junction with his chief. So Dumouriez, with Kellermann now linked on to him to his left and to the south, stood with his back to the Argonne and his face to Paris, waiting for inevitable catastrophe, while round by his right hand the enemy poured through into the open plain.

There was present with those invading columns a man supremely gifted with the power both to observe and to express, a young man destined soon to bear one of the greatest of names. This was Goethe. For Goethe was with the German armies, and we have from him some account of what he saw. We can see through his eyes the bare, dull



GOETHE.

GOETHE, WHO WAS WITH THE GERMAN ARMY AT VALMY

landscape, with low, misty clouds hurrying above it, now hiding all things in rain, now in an interval of drier weather showing a steaming reek coming up from the drenched fields; and between those two flats of gray earth and gray sky the dark bodies of troops moving like ordered herds westward from the Argonne and the woods, on over the rolling of the open land.

By this night of the nineteenth of September they had taken their full march and were drawn up with their backs to Paris, their faces to the Argonne, over against the French lines. The invaders could not leave those forces of Dumouriez's behind them upon their communications. It was their task, now that the Argonne was forced, to clear away by capture or by dispersal the army that was still in existence, though doubtful, or, rather, only too certain of its fate.

Now, this long way round by the northern gate in the hills, this lengthening of tortuous communications, and the persistent rain of those days, made it imperative that the decision should be taken promptly. Dysentery had been present in the Prussian and Austrian forces for some time. In

the abominable weather it had lately increased. Bread, which was almost their only ration (until they should come out into more favorable lands a day's march ahead upon the road to Paris), came up but tardily and clumsily by the long round of the muddy road. It was imperative that Dumouriez and his checker-work hotchpotch of volunteers, of mercenaries, of old regulars, officered at random, and even some only half-officered, should be swept from the communications if the invasion was to proceed; and therefore without repose, and with the army as it found itself after fighting through the Argonne and making the long march afterward, was to attack at once, with the first light of the next day, the twentieth. That day was to be decisive in the business of the modern world. For, by coincidences upon which men still debate, but which I think can be explained, and which I shall now present, the invaders failed in their easy task. Dumouriez's troops were left intact after the attempted action, and the armed reduction of the Revolution was postponed so long that it became at last impossible.

After all those days of cold and deadly rain the

dawn broke uncertainly through a dense mist that covered all the swellings and tumbled land. The extreme right of the invaders' line, the Prussian regiments with their king, reaching southward as far as the Paris road, was in the thick of it. Northward it lay somewhat more loosely and thinly where the Austrians formed the left extremity. But everywhere it was too dense for any observation. Such scouting as was attempted groped painfully yard by yard in that confusion, and there was at first no wind at all, nor any lifting of the fog.

It was some two hours after sunrise before the first break in this veil appeared, and that but a slight one. We have the relation from the pen of the man who saw it. He was out with a small patrol of cavalry, feeling and groping thus beyond the Paris road to discover what the French might be doing under the cover of such white nothingness, when a momentary air raised the veil for fifty yards or so, and he found himself point-blank against a battery of four guns, the French gunners standing idly by. Their position was such that, had the day been clear, they would have enfiladed the whole Prussian line. The young man set down in his

diary this commonplace, of awful meaning to a man who had had one such glimpse in such a fog in such a morning:

"Upon what threads of chance do not the fates of empires depend!"

But this extreme battery of the French knew nothing of opportunity. The fog closed again immediately. The vague, mounted figures that the gunners had seen were swallowed up at once, and the effect of that strange encounter was to make the officer in command of the guns withdraw them, fearing that in his feeling through the mist on to that little height he had pushed his pieces too far. The Prussian patrol *heard,* though they now could not see even so few yards away, the hoofs of the horses sogging up with the limber, the clanking of the hooked guns, and the retirement across the moist stubble. They heard the swish of the wheels and occasional commands fainter and fainter, and then nothing.

As the morning advanced, however, the wind which had carried the rain of all those days—a wind from the south and east—began to blow again, and drove the mist before it into very low, scurrying



FRANÇOIS CHRISTOPHE KELLERMANN,

DUC DE VALMY,
Maréchal et Pair de France,
Grand Croix des Ordres de la Fidélité de Bade
et de l'Aigle d'Or de Wurtemberg, Grand Cordon de la Légion d'Honneur,
Grand Croix de l'Ordre Royal et Militaire de S.t Louis,
Né le 28 Mai 1735 à Strasbourg, Dépt. du Bas Rhin

à Paris, chez l'Auteur, rue de Tournon N.o 5 Faub. St. Germain.

MARSHAL FRANÇOIS-CHRISTOPHE KELLERMANN, DUKE OF VALMY

clouds, so low that they covered the insignificant ridge of Argonne and so low that the steeple of Sainte-Menehould, the little county town at the foot of the hills, disappeared into them. But those low clouds left the rolls of land in the plain itself free from their mist, and at last the armies could see each other; and this is what the Prussian line drawn up upon the one ridge saw as it looked eastward to the other.

There was more than half a mile, but less than a mile, of very shallow, concave dip separating this swell, or crest, upon which the King of Prussia and his staff had drawn up their regiments and another similar swell, or crest, opposite where was the French left, the troops of Kellermann.

This opposing crest beyond the very shallow and perfectly bare valley bore, standing in the midst of the French line, a windmill—a windmill famous now in the legends and songs of the French army, an object that has grown symbolic, and that you will find in all the legends and pictures of the battle. It was the Mill of Valmy. Indeed, Valmy village was close by, but hidden by the crest, for it lay upon the farther slope.

The French line thus strung on each side of the mill upon the crest presented a contrast indeed to the strict rod-like files of the Prussian infantry that watched them from over the depression. Their loose order, their confusion, their lack of officers, their heterogeneous composition, their doubtful discipline—all these in the soul of that army were externally expressed by something straggling and unsure. The very uniforms, so far as one could discern them at such a distance, were often groups grotesque, often ragged, and sometimes interspersed with dull, civilian clothes. A man, when he saw that sight, might have thought, perhaps, that he was watching a crowd stretched out for a spectacle rather than soldiers. But in one arm, by which the French have often conquered, and to which the greatest of their captains was later strongly attached,—I mean the guns,—something stricter prevailed, and forty were drawn up on the cusp of the crescent near the mill.

For a mile or two, in various groups, northward of this position that Kellermann had taken up lay the French right under Dumouriez, and opposite him in turn were the Austrians. From the Prus-

sian ridge, which I take for my point of view, since it was there, or rather in sight of it, that the issue was determined, uncertain portions of Dumouriez's command and certain Austrians could be discerned by peering up to the left and noting the furnishings of men upon certain points of higher ground. But the immediate business lay between those two lines, the one so strict, the other so loose, that faced each other upon each crest of that long, slow trough under Valmy Mill.

The ground separating these two lines, the slight fall from the one, the level at the bottom, the slight rise to the other, demands particular notice. It was, as the reader will soon see, the whole matter upon which the fate of this cannonade, and therefore of Europe, turned. Save in one place, where a few bushes and shallow, disused diggings for marl disturbed its even surface, it is for the most part plowland. At this date in the autumn, the twentieth of September, it is covered with stubble, and the short, stiff straws, cut close to the soil by the sickle, make it seem like the ground of any other open field. No trickle of water runs through it even after rains. There is no appearance of

swamp or marsh. One is not warned by rushes or other water growths of any difference between this field and any other field. So it dips and rises again for its half or three quarters of a mile of breadth and for its mile or so of length, almost everywhere under crop, and now under autumn stubble, save here and there where balks of measly grass have been left that show between their insufficient blades the dirty gray-white of that half-chalky soil.

It was across such land, such to the eye at least, that the assault upon the French must be made after the advance had been properly prepared by artillery.

And prepared it was. The Prussian commanders let loose so furious a cannonade as had not been heard by any living soldier of that day. Miles away in the pass of les Islettes, an Englishman, who by strange adventure was the brigadier-general, holding that position to protect the rear of the French against attack, a man who had been through the whole American war, a certain General Money, of whose strange fate I have written elsewhere, marveled at the continuity and sustainment of all that fire. Distant Argonne shook with



A REPUBLICAN GENERAL



A COLONEL OF INFANTRY

In the French Army

it, and the ground carried the thuds mile upon mile. They felt it in Sainte-Menehould like the shock of falling timber.

But the range was long for the field-pieces of those days, and one's target at a thousand yards very uncertain. Many a missile flew over the heads of the motley French line, many fell short, and buried themselves in the wet bank of the slope before it. The losses so inflicted by hour after hour of sustained battery-work were not great, nor did that loose line upon each side of the mill seem to fluctuate or waver, nor were the King of Prussia and his staff, or Brunswick, commanding all, overcertain when the apt time for the critical charge and the advance of their infantry would come.

For to the Prussian guns the French gunners replied with a fire almost equally maintained and upon the whole of greater precision. They could not dominate the enemy's fire; they were, indeed, inferior to it, but they did not allow themselves to be dominated by it. It was the remark of all those who watched that field upon either side that the French forces in this one respect of the guns had powerfully surprised the invaders by their unex-

pected efficiency. So the cannonade went on until men the least used to battle, the young recruits of Prussia, the young poet Goethe himself, looking, and noting curiously and a little sickly what "cannon fever" meant, were used to the roar and the blows of sound, and had come to make it a sort of background for their mind.

It was at an hour that will never be precisely known,—so difficult is it to determine by evidence the phases even of a single action, but probably early in the afternoon, between one and two o'clock, —that all this tornado of sound was hugely overborne by a crash and a thunder like no other. A lucky shot from the Prussian batteries fell into the midst of the French limbers, and in a sudden explosion great masses of ammunition blew wheels, cases, horses, and men up in a sheaf of flame and in plumes of smoke close by Valmy Mill. There, in the very center of the French line, the commanders, now watching eagerly through their glasses from the Prussian ridge, saw the beginning of a breakdown: a whole brigade was stampeding. It was, by a curious irony, a brigade of German mercenaries still retained in the French service. But

as they broke, others also wavered; the line was in desperate confusion, and might at any moment lose such formation as it had.

This was the opportunity for the charge, and Brunswick sent forward one—slightly advanced, in front of and to the right of its neighbor, in the formation called echelon—the companies of the famous Prussian line. They began their descent into the shallow valley—a slow descent, their boots clogged by pounds of the field mud; a perilous advance, with their own guns firing over their heads across the valley, but an advance which, when it should be complete, the half-mile crossed, and the opposing slope taken at the charge, would descend to the business of the invasion, and would end the resistance of the Revolutionary armies. Against them as they went forward was now directed some part of the French artillery fire, such part as could be spared from the Prussian guns above. They halted often, they were often realined, but their slow progress was still working, ordered, and exactly maintained under that dramatic discipline which made in those days, as it does now, the apparatus, perhaps, of Prussian excellence and certainly

of Prussian prestige. They reached the level between the two lines; they touched the first rise of the opposing slope.

Meanwhile Kellermann, upon his horse, when the French line had wavered upon the great explosion, rode suddenly along it, and with his feathered general's hat high upon the point of his sword, waving it, called loudly for cheers—cheers for the nation, which was the Revolutionary cry. The young men, emboldened, recovered some sort of formation, and loudly responded with the cheers he had demanded; the brigade that had broken was drawn up, put in reserve. The guns during that critical five minutes had behaved as though they had been veterans, nor had their fire diminished, nor had a gunner moved save just in that central point where the destruction of so much ammunition for a moment checked the rapidity of fire.

The French guns, then, continually alive, turned more and more from the Prussian batteries to the infantry advancing against them up the slope. The Prussian guns, as their men came nearer to the French, had nearly to cease their fire or to diverge it to the left and to the right. You could see



UNDER THE MILL AT VALMY

along the French line the handling of the muskets and the preparing to meet by infantry fire the Prussian charge when it should come within its fifty or eighty yards.

But to that distance it never came. For at this last phase of the battle, or, rather, of the cannonade,—it was no true battle,—there happened the wholly unexpected, the almost miraculous and, in the eyes of many historians, the inexplicable thing. The Prussian companies in all their length, now within four hundred yards of the French line, thinned a little by French cannon fire, but quite unmoved and morally prepared for the advance, halted. Their progress, resumed, watched anxiously by their commanders upon the height behind, grew slower and slower, was made in jerks, checked in a yard or two, finally stood still. There standing, one would say, within touch of victory, suffering with admirable obedience the steady loss under the French shot, and with admirable discipline closing its ranks, this Prussian infantry was seen at last to fall back, to turn, and to retire. As slowly as they had come, in the same order, with the same absence of looseness anywhere, the files, suffering

less and less with every yard of their retirement from the French batteries, came nearly to their ancient stations, were drawn up just below the crest from which they had started somewhat over half an hour before. Valmy became again a cannonade and only a cannonade, but at the sight of this returning of their foes the French continually cheered, and the guns seemed to put on more vigor, and it almost seemed as though the numbers of the defenders grew.

The afternoon wore on, the cannonade slackened toward evening, and it was one fitful shot and then another, and then none at last, and when darkness fell the two lines stood where they had stood in the morning. But the assault had failed. What had happened? Why had not the Prussian charge proceeded?

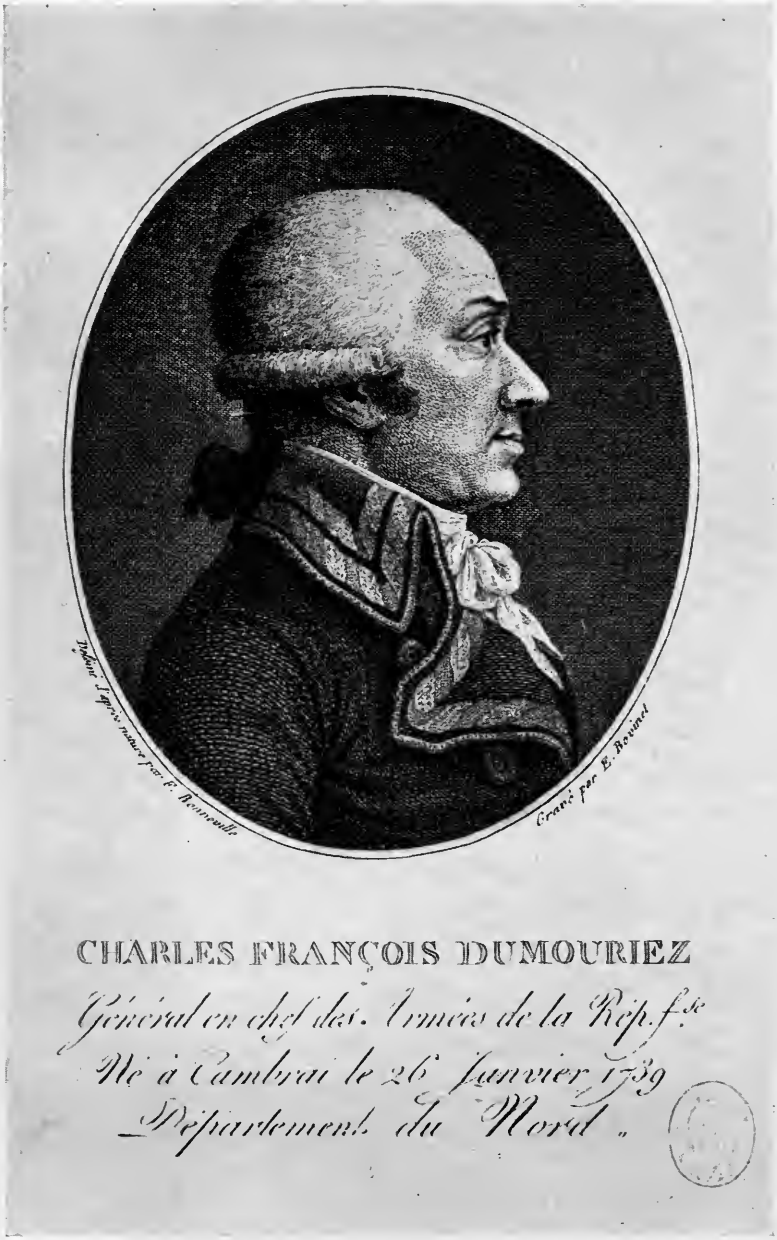
Now, to that question, which has produced many and strange answers, I think a true answer can be provided, and I shall attempt to provide it upon the authority of an observation made very closely and with the unique intention of understanding this unique affair in the history of arms. For when I went to make myself acquainted with Valmy field

it was in the same season, in the same weather, after the same rains, in the same mists, and I believe that I have as much as any man lived in the circumstances in which that issue was decided. I believe, having myself gone over that depression from the Prussian ridge toward the French, in just that weather and after just those rains, that the advance was stopped by nothing more mysterious than marshy soil.

History is empty of evidence, and we have nothing to learn. Upon the French side the retirement seemed inexplicable, and upon the Prussian the shame and failure of it seemed to have tied every man's tongue; yet I believe it to be due to nothing more romantic than mud. Certain of our contemporaries in modern history have said that Brunswick did not desire to press the action, but that his sympathy was with the Revolutionary forces. To talk like that is to misunderstand the whole psychology of soldiery; more, in such an action it is to misunderstand the whole psychology of men. Brunswick could not have recalled the charge without good cause on such a day and with such men about him as the King of Prussia, the emigrant

princes and the commanders; but the thing is, on the face of it, absurd. A wiser guess, but made erroneously, ascribes the retirement to the persistence and effect of the French artillery-fire as the Prussian charge approached. This must certainly be rejected, for we know that the advance was steady, and the retirement too, and what is more, we know how comparatively small were the losses. It was not due to an officer losing his head, for the whole line retired without breaking and in consonance. It certainly was not due to any doubt as to the moral ability of the men to continue the ordeal that they had suffered so admirably over six hundred yards of ground and over perhaps a quarter of an hour of time.

Those who will do as I did, and visit Valmy in the autumn, and after the rains, and walk by no path or any picking of one's way, but straight across the stubble, as the soldiers of those companies had to do, will, I am sure, decide as I here decide. For they will come to a belt not upon the bottom level, but at the beginning of the opposing slope, where, under the deceitful similarity of the unchanged stubble, and with nothing to mark the



GENERAL CHARLES-FRANÇOIS DUMOURIEZ
In Command of the French at Valmy

drowned state of the soil, that soil becomes virtually impassable, certainly impassable to men under fire. The French had before them, though they did not know it, a true obstacle, the unwitting attempt to cross which as though it were no obstacle lost the Prussians the battle, and with the battle lost the kings and the aristocracies of Europe their throw against the French democracy.

Night fell, still misty, but unbroken by the sound of arms or of marching. With the next day, when the invaders counted their losses these, not overheavy, they were appalled to find made far graver by a great increase of dysentery, which such a night in the open after such a day had produced. At the end of a week they fell back eastward again, followed and hampered by the French cavalry, and when they passed the boundaries of what was now the republic, a blank-shot fired from the walls of Longwy closed this great episode in the story of the Gauls.

PART FIVE

THE DEATH OF LOUIS XVI



REPUBLICAN SOLDIERS IN THE REVOLUTION

INTRODUCTION

After the Battle of Valmy, the French armies, with the beginning of autumn, obtained quite unexpected and, as they were to prove, ephemeral successes. Dumouriez, a man of vast military ability, continued to command. The Republican armies poured over the Low Countries. Coincident with these successes, there came a period of high political excitement in Paris, and the rise of a sort of crusading spirit to spread the democratic principles throughout Europe and to transform society. It is to this more than to any other cause that we must ascribe the trial and execution of the king. There was, indeed, from the point of view of statesmanship alone, some excuse for the trial and fate of Louis. So long as he lived, he was necessarily a rallying-point round which all the counter-revolution would gather. The royal family having been kept in strict imprisonment, but not without some state and considerable luxury, in the tower of the Temple, a medieval building in the northeastern part of Paris, it was at first uncertain what would be done with them. The first steps in the affair took the form of an examination of the papers found in the palace and of a report on Louis's conduct. The accusations against the fallen king were formulated on the third of November. There were debates as to the legality of trying a former head of the state. The trial

was decreed exactly a month later. Louis was to plead at the bar of the Convention,—that is, the national congress,—which had met just before Valmy, and which had voted the republic. Long before his trial began, he was already separated from the rest of his family, who were given rooms above his own in the Temple. The indictment was framed by a committee, which reported on the tenth of December; on the eleventh Louis appeared at the bar of the Convention. He had three advocates, the chief being the old and highly respected legist Malesherbes. The king appeared for the second time on the twenty-sixth of December, and withdrew after the speeches for the defense had been made. His guilt was pronounced by the unanimous vote of the Parliament, no one voting against, and only five abstaining. What followed I now describe.

PART FIVE

THE DEATH OF LOUIS XVI

THE long trial at the bar of the Parliament was over. The pleas had been heard, and old Malesherbes, weighty and with dignity at once of ancient law, of contempt for fate, and of complete self-control, had done all that could be done for the king. The verdict had been given. Louis was found guilty by all of betraying the nation. He had called in the enemy. There remained to be decided by a further vote what his penalty should be.

It was the evening of Wednesday, January 16, 1793. The deputies of the nation were to vote, each publicly and by name, an enormous roll-call of hundreds of men; each was to come up the steps to the tribune, to face the vast audience that stretched from left to right of the riding-school, and to pronounce clearly his decision. Each was free,

if he chose, to add to his declaration the motives that had determined it.

The three great chandeliers that hung from the roof of the place were lit, affording a mellow, but insufficient, light in which the faces of the great throng, small dots of white on the black background, were but ill distinguished. Upon the tribune itself a brighter light was turned.

The sun had long set; the evening meal was over; at eight o'clock the interminable procession began. They came on one by one, arranged in groups by their constituencies. They went up in turn the steps of the tribune from the right, voted in open voice, descended by the left. Among the first was Robespierre, because he was of those that sat for the capital. He made a speech (too long) to explain what he was about to do. He protested that if the penalty of death was odious to him, and if he had combated it consistently as a general principle of law, yet did he now support it for this exceptional case. "I remain compassionate for the oppressed. I know nothing of that humanity which is forever sacrificing whole peoples and protecting tyrants. . . . I vote for death."



LAMOIGNON DE MALESHERBES, COUNSEL FOR THE KING AT HIS TRIAL

One after another the deputies for Paris, the extreme men, the men of the Mountain, mounted those few steps, faced the great silent body of their colleagues, while those who had just voted before them were quietly seeking their places again, and those who were about to vote stood lined up before the steps upon the farther side, and one after the other gave his voice for death. Each after so declaring loudly his responsibility, his verdict, and his name, confirmed the whole by the signing of a roll.

The voice of Danton was heard, the harsh, but deep and strong, voice that was already the first in the country. He had sat all that day by the bedside of his wife, who was to die. He had but just come back from the frontiers and from the army. His huge body was broken with fatigue; his soul was heavy with grief; his powerful brain was aching from a lack of sleep. "I am no politician," he shouted; "I vote for death."

So all night long the dreadful litany proceeded. Men left the hall to take an hour or two of sleep, a snatch of food; yet the hall seemed always full despite the coming and going of single figures, and through the long, cold darkness of that misty

weather history heard voice after voice, weak, strong, ashamed, defiant, pitiful, muffled, outspoken, bass, treble, old, and young, repeating at regular intervals: "Death absolute"; "Death with respite"; "Banishment"; "Imprisonment." And history saw, after each such speech or cry (for many spoke as well before they declared the doom), an isolated man, high upon the tribune, beneath the candles, bending over the register and signing to what he had determined and proclaimed.

The dull dawn of winter broke through a leaden sky. No eastern window received it. The tall, gaunt casements of the southern wall overlooking the Tuileries Gardens grew gradually into lighter oblongs of gray. The candles paled and were extinguished. Hardly a third of the list was done. All that short January day (Thursday, the seventeenth of January) the dreadful thing proceeded until darkness fell again, until once more the chandeliers were lit. Once more it was night, and they were still voting, still declaring.

At last, when more than twenty-four hours had passed, the business was over. No one was left to come forward to the tribune; and this great sleep-

less mass, within which some few had noted one by one the voices as they fell, and had already calculated the issue, waited for the counting of the votes and for the recounting. Not only by word of mouth, nor only by the signing of the register, had the precision of so awful an event been secured, but one by one the votes had been written down, folded, and sealed. The clerks of the Parliament opened each packet and arranged the sentences in rows, according to their tenor: for death absolute, for imprisonment, for delay. So one hour went past, and then another; but in the third, when it was perhaps ten o'clock, this silent process was interrupted, and the many that had fallen asleep, or were nodding half asleep after such a vigil, looked up surprised to hear that two letters had reached the assembly, one from some agent of the Bourbon king in Spain to demand a respite; the other from the advocates of the king, who demanded to be heard once more before the chair should announce the result of the voting.

All was interrupted; an immediate and passionate, though short, debate began. The intervention of the King of Spain the Convention would not

consider; upon the proposal that the king's advocates should be heard once more a debate was allowed. Many members joined it, though in brief periods. Robespierre, among others, spoke intensely. He demanded that sentence should be read out and given before there could be any consideration of appeal. That opinion (not through him) prevailed, and the opening and arranging of the votes continued. A ceaseless little crackling of tearing papers, the whispered comments of men in groups, now and then some cry from the public in the galleries, broke the silence.

It was not far from midnight when a further movement among the clerks at the table, a comparison of sums, and heads bent together, scrutinizing the additions, prefaced the last scene of this act. The paper, with the figures written on it, was handed up to the chairman. That chairman was Vergniaud; perhaps the noblest, certainly the most eloquent, of the Girondins. He rose in his place above them, holding that paper before him, and read out in the grave and even voice which had often moved their debates:

"It is with profound sadness that I declare the

PROCLAMATION

DU

CONSEIL EXÉCUTIF

PROVISOIRE.

EXTRAIT des Regiſtres du Conſeil, du 20 Janvier 1793, l'an ſecond de la République.

LE Conſeil exécutif proviſoire délibérant ſur les meſures à prendre pour l'exécution du décret de la Convention nationale, des 15, 17, 19 & 20 janvier 1793, arrête les diſpoſitions ſuivantes.

1.° L'exécution du jugement de Louis Capet ſe fera demain lundi 21.

2.° Le lieu de l'exécution ſera la *Place de la Révolution*, ci-devant *Louis XV*, entre le pied-d'eſtal & les Champs-élyſées.

3.° Louis Capet partira du Temple à huit heures du matin, de manière que l'exécution puiſſe être faite à midi.

4.° Des Commiſſaires du Département de Paris, des Commiſſaires de la Municipalité, deux membres du Tribunal criminel aſſiſteront à l'exécution. Le Secrétaire-greffier de ce Tribunal en dreſſera le procès-verbal, & leſdits Commiſſaires & Membres du Tribunal, auſſitôt après l'exécution conſommée, viendront en rendre compte au Conſeil, lequel reſtera en ſéance permanente pendant toute cette journée.

Le Conſeil exécutif proviſoire.

ROLAND, CLAVIERE, MONGE, LEBRUN, GARAT, PASCHE.

Par le Conſeil, GROUVELLE.

A PARIS, DE L'IMPRIMERIE NATIONALE EXÉCUTIVE DU LOUVRE. 1793.

PROCLAMATION OF THE PROVISIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

penalty incurred by Louis Capet to be, by the vote of the majority of this assembly, that of death."

Of seven hundred and twenty-one men who had voted, three hundred and ninety-seven had demanded the scaffold, a majority of seventy-three.

It was in complete silence that this memorable sentence fell. That silence was continued for some moments unbroken. The advocates of the king were now permitted to enter, for sentence had been formally delivered, and old Malesherbes, short, strong in figure for all his years, and now so far oblivious of his dignity and name as to be weeping, put forward his last plea. Sentence of death could not be given, by all the traditions of their law, unless two thirds of the bench (for the French will have no single judges) concurred. And again, the prisoner had not had all those guaranties which a prisoner should have. And again, since it was as the head of the whole nation that he had acted, and since it was by the whole nation that he was conceived to be judged, then let the whole nation speak. He demanded an appeal to the French people.

For a third time Robespierre spoke. He spoke

with more emotion than his peculiar academic style commonly permitted. Though he was in no way representative as yet of public feeling, though he was still a lesser man among those hundreds, for the third time his opinion coincided with that which was to prevail. He implored the assembly not to reopen the whole issue of civil war by putting this grave matter upon which they had fixedly decided to a general vote of millions. Not for the first time did this unalterable man betray for a moment his own unalterable creed. Later he was himself to perish in punishment divine of such deviations from the conscience of equality and of citizenship.

Guadet—Guadet, the Girondin—spoke for the king in the legal matter. Merlin, a jurisconsult of some weight, replied. It was not true, he said, that by the traditions of the common law a majority of two thirds was required to confirm so grave a sentence in any tribunal. Upon points of *fact,* he urged, a majority not of two thirds, but more,—of ten out of twelve judges or assessors should determine,—but for the *penalty* a bare majority—three votes out of five given from the bench—had always been held sufficient. The appeal of Louis was re-

jected, and the Convention rose after a continued session of thirty-six hours.

There remained the question of respite. It was debated upon the next day, Friday. It was with a singular difficulty that this second debate proceeded. Men left their places time and again during the course of the day; there was such confusion that no vote could be taken; and all the Saturday the thing hung in the balance right on into the small hours—the dark and cold small hours of the January night. It was three o'clock upon the Sunday morning before the final vote appeared. Six hundred and ninety men decided it, and a majority of seventy was found for immediate death.

That Sunday, Louis, in the prison of the Temple, in the great square tower where he and his wife and his children and his sister had now for many months been held captive, suffered his passion.

It is singular, instructive, a lesson in history, to note what the man's temper was during this prodigious time. The curious may examine (displayed under glass in the archives for all to see) the note which he wrote out with his own hand in

his prison. It proves in its handwriting and in its composition, in its very erasures, a momentous calm. If courage in the presence of death be a chief index to character, admire so complete a courage present in a man whose lack of judgment, torpor, grave lethargies, whose imbecilities even, had helped to bring him where he was. Louis, but for his death, might pass to history among the negligible figures of her roll; but see how he died!

The note, written finely in even lines, asks for a delay of three days "to permit me to appear before the presence of God." It asks further for the right to have his own confessor and for the guarantying of that confessor (the Abbé Edgeworth, of course) from all anxiety. He asks to see his family, and he recommends to the good-will of the nation all those who were attached to his person.

Here and there he changes a word, scratching out the original expression deliberately, rewriting the substituted expression in a hand as firm as the rest. It is curious to note that he twice expunges the term "the National Convention." He was making his address to the Convention, and yet he would not use its title.



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THE LAST VICTIMS OF THE TERROR

The night came early upon that Sunday, for the unbroken, drizzling sky still stretched above Paris, and there was no sunset. Moreover, the insufficient windows of the medieval tower, sunk in their thick walls, were partly boarded to prevent communication with friends outside. After some hours had passed,—rather more than two hours in the light of the candles,—it was somewhat after eight o'clock and the time for the supreme ordeal, for his family were to be admitted.

For some weeks now he had been separated from them. They had been in the rooms above. His demand for three days had been rejected. He was to die upon the morrow, but he was to be permitted to see his own before he died, and to discuss with his confessor what he nobly called "the great business" of our passage from this life.

There gave upon the stair facing the narrow stone staircase of the Temple a great oaken door, studded with many huge old nails. It opened, and the queen came in. God! what must we not imagine her to have seemed in that moment, this woman who had so despised him, and yet had been faithful to him, and had principally ruined him; and who

had, in these last months, so marvelously changed and grown in soul. The queen came in falteringly. She held by the hand her rickety little son; her somewhat dull little daughter, the elder of the children, followed. The king's sister, the Princess Elizabeth, of a different and more simple bearing, and of a soul longer tried and longer purified, came in more erect, the last of the four.

The king sat down and put his wife upon his left, his sister upon his right. He took the boy, the last heir of the Capetian monarchy, and stood him between his knees, and told him in a clear manner and in a low and even tone the duties of a Christian in the difficult matter of revenge, that it must be foregone. He lifted up the boy's little right hand to give to this direction the sanctity of an oath.

It seems that few words were spoken during that terrible time. The queen clung to him somewhat. He mastered himself well. Altogether these three and the two children were assembled for nearly two hours. A little before ten he himself determined this agony must end.

Marie Antoinette, as was her custom under stress, broke out into passionate protestation.

KING LOUIS TAKING LEAVE OF HIS FAMILY IN THE TOWER OF THE TEMPLE

Then she checked herself and admitted doom. But she implored him that they should see him again, and he said to her, perhaps unwisely, that he would see her before he left for his passing. He would see her in the morning. She would have it earlier still. He said it should be earlier by half an hour. She made him promise solemnly enough, and he promised her. Ten o'clock had struck, and the chimes were sounding over Paris and from the great clock of the Temple before she unloosed her hands.

He stood, the women passed out with weak knees (it is said that the girl was half fainting), the oaken door shut behind them, and the iron door outside it clanged to. He heard their soft steps, slow and creaking, mounting the winding stone stairs without, then they were lost, and he was in silence. He prayed a moment and then lay down to sleep. He slept deeply till five in the morning. The men bringing in the vessels for a mass awoke him. He rose and prayed.

In the full darkness, before it was yet six o'clock, the queen heard a step approaching up the stairs. It could not be the king. She watched from above

her candle. It was a messenger come for books of devotion which the king required at his mass and communion. Then she heard the chimes of seven, and the day was breaking; upon her window the falling mist had made a blur, and it was very cold. She waited on until eight o'clock. There was no sound. Her agony was unrelieved. Yet another hour, and she heard steps and the coming and going of many men upon the stone stairs below. No one came up. The sounds sank away. The great door that gave into the courtyard was heard creaking upon its hinges, there was the pawing of horses upon the stones, and the cries of command to the escort, a certain confused noise from the crowd outside the walls. The tower was empty. She had not seen the king.

The king had passed through the prison door. He had gone on foot, with the priest by his side, across the little court to the high wall which surrounded the tower. The guards followed him.

Just before he came to the barrier he turned back to look at the prison. He made a slight gesture as of constraint, and firmly turned again toward the gate.



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A MASS UNDER THE TERROR

Outside this the guards were drawn up, and a roomy carriage of the sort that was then hired in the streets by the wealthy stood at the entrance. Two policemen armed with muskets were awaiting him at the carriage door. As Louis appeared, one of these men got in and took his seat with his back to the horses. Then the king entered, sitting in his proper place upon the right, facing him, and motioned to the priest, Edgeworth, to sit beside him. When they were both thus seated, the second policeman took his place opposite, and he and his colleague set their guns before them. The door was shut, the cab started at a foot's pace.

As they came out on the broad streets (for they followed the boulevards), they could see upon each side of the way, three or four ranks deep, the soldiery and militia which guarded those few miles through the town. There was no crowd behind them, or at least but few spectators, and a curious observer might have noted how few and rare were the uniforms, how many of the thousands alined were clothed in workman's dress or in the mere remnants of military coats. Even the windows of the uneven houses they passed (the boulevards were

then but half built) gaped empty, and no one stood at the doors.

Before the carriage marched a great multitude of men, all enregimented in some sort of troop, and the greater part of them drummers. These last drummed incessantly, so that this long and very slow procession was confused and deafened with a loud and ceaseless sound. Paris heard that sound rolling up afar from the eastward, crashing past its houses, lost again toward the west.

It was close upon eleven o'clock when the carriage came before the unfinished columns of the Madeleine and turned into the rue Royale.

Louis was reading from a book the Psalms which his confessor had pointed out to him when he noticed that the carriage had stopped. He looked up, turned to the priest, and said in a low voice:

"Unless I am mistaken, we are there." The priest did not answer.

They had come to that wide open space which is now called the Place de la Concorde, and as he looked quietly through the windows, the doomed man perceived a great throng of people densely packed about a sort of square of cannon which sur-

rounded the scaffold and guillotine. That fatal woodwork and the machine it bore stood near the entrance of the rue Royale and a little to the east. One of the executioners (who stood at the foot of the scaffold) took the handle of the carriage door to open it. Louis stopped him and, putting one hand on the priest's knee before he got out, said:

"Sirs, I recommend you this gentleman here. See to it that after my death no insult shall be offered him."

They said nothing in reply, but when the king would have continued, one of them cried:

"Oh, yes, yes. We will see to it. Leave it to us."

The king opened the door, and came out into the freshness of that damp air. Above, the sky was still quite gray and low, but the misty drizzle had ceased. They made as though to take off his coat and his collar. He moved them aside, and himself disembarrassed his neck. Then one came forward with a cord and took his hands.

"What are you at?" he cried.

"We must bind you," said the man.

"Bind me!" answered the king. "I will never

allow it! Fulfil your orders, but you *shall* not bind me!"

There was a struggle in which he turned to the priest as though for counsel or for aid, but they bound his hands behind him.

The few steps up to the scaffold were very steep. The Abbé Edgeworth supported him so bound, and thought for a moment, as he felt the weight upon his arm, that the prisoner was losing courage. But even as he turned to glance furtively at the king, in that crisis Louis had strengthened himself, and stood upright upon the broad stage. With a few rapid and determined steps he took his way toward the guillotine, standing to the right of the instrument. Some yards in front of him and below a score of drummers were at the ready with sticks lifted, balanced as drummers balance them between the knuckles of the hand. He cried out, standing erect with his stout figure and heavy, impassive face, "I die innocent of all the—" at which moment there came a sudden cry of command, and the drums beat furiously. To that sound he died; and those who were present relate that immediately afterward there arose from the great mob about,



THE DEATH OF KING LOUIS XVI, JANUARY 21, 1793

which had hitherto held its breath, a sort of loud moaning, not in anger or in hatred, but in astonishment of the spectacle and of things to come.

PART SIX

LAFAYETTE AND THE FALL OF THE FRENCH MONARCHY

INTRODUCTION

After the palace had been stormed, it seemed as though Lafayette, who was in command of the principal army toward the frontier, might change all the destinies of France. It was a moment in which discipline had been very badly shaken, and he had the best trained troops to his hand. He was trusted by the wealthier classes in Paris, and though the queen and the royal family as a whole disliked him, it was known that he would not consent to the abolition of the monarchy. Undoubtedly if Lafayette had been either less scrupulous or a more energetic man, he would have intervened; but that would have required a certain amount of preparation. He would have had to "feel" the opinion of his subordinates, and perhaps compromise with the new Government. He did neither. He acted immediately, but too simply, refused to acknowledge the new Government, failed to resist it, and was superseded by it. Doubting his power to unite his command against the new state of affairs, he crossed the frontier and abandoned the country.

PART SIX

LAFAYETTE AND THE FALL OF THE FRENCH MONARCHY

THE life of Lafayette has for his fellow countrymen and for most students of European history one supreme critical moment, which coincides with a supreme and critical moment in the story of our civilization. It was at that moment in the afternoon of Sunday, the nineteenth of August, 1792, when he crossed the frontier and abandoned the defense of his own country.

In the United States both the story and the legend of Lafayette have another origin. He came here as the leader of a rally of young Frenchmen who were enthusiastic for an experiment in political freedom. He was immensely wealthy and the master of his own young life, for his father and mother were long dead; there was nothing to trammel his action, and though he was only a boy not yet of age, his figure acquired, as was right, a sim-

ple and luminous quality in the eyes of those whom he had joined before they had successfully maintained their independence.

Lafayette came back to America long after, when time had added to this conception of him nothing that was not to his advantage. He was, in that second coming of his, surrounded by younger men, who felt for him all the reverence we humans feel for an older generation of heroes (he was nearer seventy than sixty years of age); he was known to have kept himself pure from the excesses of the French Revolution—excesses which were nowhere more detested than in America, and which had not yet been made explicable by the process of history. He came back to them, preserving the same ideal of liberty that he had discovered among them nearly fifty years before.

It is no wonder that the view held of him in the foreign country he had served under arms should be what we know it to be.

Nevertheless, if his career be considered as a whole, his interior temperament and character, as well as the external effect of these upon his contemporaries, are best judged by that later conspic-

uous ordeal through which he passed in the vigor of his manhood, when he decided neither to defend nor to coerce the French people, but to be rid of his native soil and the obligations of his birth. This ordeal showed Lafayette under the strongest light and in his fullest development. Whether he was wrong or right *then,* if wrong or right, *why,* are final answers to the problem of his place in history.

The moment when he deliberately abandoned the French army for exile he was within a few weeks of his thirty-fifth birthday, and the events which had led up to that final catastrophe had concerned the fullest and most active years of his career. We know him most largely and we can judge him most justly if we consider his work between the April when war first put its real novel and molding pressure upon the French Revolution and the August day in which he saw fit to surrender his command.

Lafayette was a man just thirty years of age, in the enjoyment of a fame which, both in character and in extent, was unexampled, when economic necessity, which is to great political changes what the trigger is to the firing of a rifle, compelled the

French crown to play the experiment of summoning the Assembly of the Notables.

In that futile (and necessarily barren) council he sat of right, and he found there the atmosphere which was fated to embarrass his whole effort among the French, his people, when once they were aroused. He found in that assembly the enmity of many of his equals among the very small clique of wealthy nobles of which he was a natural part, the friendship of a few, the enthusiasm of none; he found himself possessed of over-exaggerated popularity with the plebeian public outside, which was attached to his name and his story, not to his character; and while he desired to erect a new state, he figured only as one of those who in that assembly proposed financial reforms irritating to the court and, to the appetite of the French for an ideal society, so much chaff.

It would be a grave error in judgment to conceive of Lafayette then, or at any subsequent period of his life, even to his extreme old age, as a man lacking in that peculiar hunger for civic morality which distinguishes the masters of national fate from the statesmen or the mere politician.

He *did* enjoy, and throughout his life he betrayed, a firm faith in a certain and definite political ideal. It was a faith so clear that it was capable of expression in a creed, and so secure that he held it without modification from his earliest youth to his very death, and that through changes of fortune, and under the strain of a varying environment more violent than any that oppressed his contemporaries.

Unfortunately for him, his creed was a creed peculiarly unacceptable to the French people. It consisted largely of negative articles—the exact toleration of all religion that did not offend the current morality of his time, an attitude which he and many others mistook for a complete scheme of toleration; it proposed an acceptation of popular sovereignty but a popular sovereignty which Lafayette, quite unlike the French, believed could be accurately expressed by a representative system. This creed acquiesced in a limitation of civic activity and responsibility to those citizens who happened to be possessed of property and no doctrine is more odious to Catholic Europe; finally Lafayette's creed was summed up in a curiously passionate attach-

ment to the letter of organic laws or, as men put that foible in English, "a respect for the Constitution."

This last article in the political faith of Lafayette was certainly that which most strongly possessed him, and that which he most tenaciously defended to the end. He had in his feeling for it something of religion; indeed, it was in part the absence of other religion from his character which must account for so singular and so unnational an intellectual weakness. His passion for a constitution was as little based on reason, as unanswerable and as strong, as is the passion of any worshiper for the object of his worship. He did not postulate a constitution as something necessary to any state,—which it is,—nor did he accept it as one accepts any other inevitable mechanical condition of national life: he adored it. And he gave to his idol, as men always must to any idol, concrete form.

He was enthusiastic for a particular and visible scheme of liberty: a representative assembly, an executive responsible to it, an independent judicature, and, to speak disrespectfully, the whole bundle of tricks. If the love of country interfered with

such a scheme, or a burning zeal for equality, or deep personal love for a military leader; if an almost physical appetite for the ancient customs of the state rooted in the very heart of men interfered with it, if any of these human accidents were at issue with his idol, why, then, according to him, they must be broken at the idol's feet.

It is this strange, and, to French eyes, grossly insufficient ideal of a "constitution," which explains all that was to follow.

When the National Assembly met in May, 1789, Lafayette sat in that of the three houses which represented the nobility. The mere presence of a parliament or congress, with a crown in its neighborhood, was a beginning for his dream. To the rising flood of egalitarian feeling he gave no aid. He was not a prime mover in that prime current of the early Revolution which drew many members of the privileged orders—the nobles and the clergy—to sit frankly with the commons. But when that current was in full flood he did not resist it; when it had conquered, and when the privileged were merged in the general flood, he found himself a vice-president of the united assembly just before

the fall of the Bastille. Of course he drew up a Declaration of Rights, which, equally of course, concerned taxation, redress before supply, and the rest of it, and was removed a thousand miles from the temper of that Gaul which had been at hard war for two thousand years, which had made the orthodox religion of the West, the Crusades, the Gothic, and was now about to make the epic of Napoleon.

The capture of the Bastille was the chief incident in a group of three days that showed suddenly, as lightning shows things on a dark night, those national characteristics which Lafayette so completely misunderstood that he could not serve them: the extreme rapidity of Gallic organization, its automatic and spontaneous growth from below, its high military aptitude, the twin growths of exaltation upon the one hand and ferocity upon the other, the effect of song and of blood upon the populace, the temper that made it impossible for the two massed divisions of foreign mercenaries to coerce Paris, the supreme importance of Paris itself when in those days Paris recaptured its secular leadership of the French people—all this was to Lafa-

yette no more than a violent and incomprehensible change of condition, the leveling of a platform, as it were, upon which the constitution was to rise.

Rise it did, and on its rising he appeared in another and greater character than he had hitherto borne; for it was more under his direction than is commonly allowed that the New Régime took shape. It was he who framed the armed militia which was the physical basis of the whole construction. He was the head and the designer of that great force in Paris, well armed, more or less trained, but remaining wholly civic and domestic in character, which took the name of the National Guard.

A man might do worse than examine and fix finally for history the rôle of this force during the first two years in which the Revolution was permitted to develop its rapid progress within the frontiers of the French monarchy, without assault from the commercial oligarchy of England, the ancient privileges of the German states, the despotism of Prussia, or the heterogeneous, but enormous, might of Austria and the empire. In the opinion of the present writer the National Guard of Paris, with

Lafayette, as its commander in chief, was not only an indispensable adjunct to the first phase of the French Revolution, but was, on the material side, the instrument of it. The voluntary quality of that force, its association with the political debates of the moment, its long agreement with the people and its lack of opportunity for display, its final collapse when the Revolution became a truly military and French thing and a crusade, have tended to obscure for posterity its true character up to the outbreak of the great war.

Had the Revolution reached its term in the Constitution of 1791, and had war with Europe been avoided, the National Guard of Paris would easily be apparent as the chief factor in that achievement: and Lafayette made it. It was he who impressed it with its particular character, he who, in consonance with his theory of the state, made it a middle class, or, as we should say to-day, a *capitalist* organization; he who forbade it to develop, as such French institutions normally develop, into a powerful military instrument, and yet he who, with his considerable talent for command, made it strong enough to act as a powerful police and to be in his



ARMAND GASTON, CARDINAL DE ROHAN
After Rigaud, in Museum of Versailles

hands a real weapon of authority that gave him a permanent and high direction in all that followed its enrolment and formation.

It is true to say that Lafayette and his National Guard saved the monarchy in the days of October, 1789, when Paris marched upon Versailles. It is still truer to say that throughout 1790 and early '91 it and he were physically the masters of Paris.

Had Lafayette loathed, as the king loathed, the religious quarrel in which the parliament of the Revolution engaged, had he with his armed force supported the crown in its resistance to the attempted schism with Rome, it is conceivable, or even probable, that the Revolution would have found a peaceable and perhaps not noble termination. But to Lafayette the religious policy of the Assembly seemed the most natural of things. Of the enduring vigor of Catholicism he knew nothing. Catholicism was for him, as for most well-to-do and educated men of that time, a venerable superstition, still pleasant to many women and to crowds of the rural poor, worthy, therefore, of a comfortable decline and of decent burial, but quite incapable of provoking a civil war. That same violence

of popular instinct which had made the St. Bartholomew in Paris and which was now about to make a furious assault upon the priesthood, was alien to him in either of its diverse and contradictory forms. Even in the end of his life, when contemporary fashion gave Lafayette some idea of religion, it was the gospel, not the church, of which he spoke; and in this early part of the Revolution he could neither conceive the strength of the old national vision in its obscure remnant nor the corresponding strength of the exasperation which the resistance of the church to the revolutionary constitution of the clergy would arouse.

The first sign that Lafayette's constitutional ideal and the militia force which was the backing of it might fail was his inability to secure for the king a free passage from the Tuileries to the suburb of St.-Cloud on the Monday of holy week in 1791. The populace was already half in power, the National Guard and their leader no longer wholly masters of the capital. The next much graver evidence of this change was in the flight of the royal family upon the night of the twentieth of June immediately succeeding; and in this the two elements fatal

to Lafayette's future in the Revolution appeared with equal clarity. On the one hand he had proved unable, with all his militia, to prevent the escape of the king; on the other hand, he thought it his duty —his duty to the Constitution—to recapture the fugitives. The king's flight, despite Lafayette's presence at the head of the National Guard, despite his personal activity in ordering the force at the palace doors and seeing upon that very night to the position of the sentinels, made him suspect in the eyes of revolutionary Paris; his activity in recapturing the king and queen made him odious to all that growing opinion in Europe and in France which had ceased to see in the Revolution a political experiment and had begun to see in it only a drama —a tragedy, the pitiful victims of which were Louis and the royal family.

It is further characteristic of Lafayette's fate that all this activity of his counted for nothing. It was not he that effected the recapture of the flying king; that was done, as much had hitherto been done, by the energy of what was popular, plebeian, and, to him, incomprehensible, in France. But as much blame as a man could gather from the issue

Lafayette most unfortunately reaped; and when the captives were brought back again after those torturing three days of heat, it was Lafayette who, as the general of the armed force in the capital, must ask Marie Antoinette to give him the keys of the palace. She threw them at him; he caught them as a man catches a ball in a game. Of the many things he did in those days, one is sufficiently characteristic, and marks his attitude in all that rising anger.

There was in Auvergne a family of squires called Romeuf; they were neighbors of the powerful and wealthy Lafayettes, whose chief estate lay at Chavagniac, close by, and Lafayette had taken one of the young Romeufs to be his aide-de-camp when he was put at the head of the National Guard. As one might imagine of poor squires, the Romeufs were intensely and personally loyal to the king; yet, whether through negligence or because his devotion to his constitutional ideal made him forget what personal affections might mean, or from a love of power, or from whatever cause, it was this young Romeuf whom Lafayette sent off post-haste along the eastern road to recapture the king and queen.



CARICATURE OF A ROYALIST



CARICATURE OF A PATRIOT

At the Outbreak of the Revolution

From the moment of the royal family's flight and its enforced return to Paris, war with Europe was apparent, and the Revolution moved toward it as toward an approaching goal. The nearer that huge and novel thing approached, the more did Lafayette's conception of a perfect state and Lafayette's militia weapon for its achievement shrivel and lose staff. The populace demanded the disenthronement of a king who was certainly allied with the foreigner. This threat of popular violence was militarily suppressed by Lafayette and his middle-class militia on the seventeenth of July, 1791, and the few dead who had been shot by Lafayette's guard became the symbols of an intense hatred between the old declining Constitutionalists and the new order that was to be established when once the cannons had begun. From that moment, despite all his ideals, he united with the privileged and the few in the eyes of his countrymen.

A month later, at Pillnitz, the Emperor of Austria and the King of Prussia met the French emigrants to issue their threat of a coalition against the new democracy and of armed intervention in the affairs of France; and when at last the accom-

plished Constitution of 1791, bourgeois, satisfactory, a strict deduction from principles which nothing so vital as the French blood has ever accepted, was compiled and sworn to, it seemed, in the presence of approaching exultation and war, like some merchant's villa carefully put in order in the suburbs of our great industrial towns—a villa just settled by some careful housewife, bound to a narrow life, but about to receive a company of soldiers, of poets, of gods, and of demons, very ill suited to such furniture. Even to the men of its own time this new Constitution, the supposed fruit of the Revolution, seemed oddly colorless as it stood contrasted against that great dark cloud of history which was rising upon the sky. But to Lafayette it was a perfected ideal.

Upon the last day of September, 1791, at four o'clock in the afternoon, the National Assembly dissolved, and the speaker of it read out these words:

"The National and Constituent Assembly declares that it has fulfilled its mission, and that its sessions are at an end."

A week later Lafayette resigned his command at

the head of the National Guard. Shortly afterward the three armies upon the frontier were drawn up, and the real game, the struggle with armed and foreign conquerors, pledged to destroy the Revolution, had begun.

The total forces at the disposal of the French crown—and it must be remembered that the crown, not the parliament, was still master of the armies—were, along the whole frontier from the Alps to the sea, a trifle over 80,000 men. They were arranged in three armies. When war was declared in the following April, all three, the army of the north, that of the center, and that of the Rhine, were each under the command of a man who would certainly defend the monarchy against the revolutionary spirit which had its center in the populace of Paris.

The smallest army, that of the center, a force of somewhat less than 20,000 men, was under the direct command of Lafayette, who was also the chief of the three commanders. Two thirds of the regimental officers had emigrated, certain of the cavalry regiments had crossed the frontier in a body; even the artillery had suffered the loss of one third of its commissioned ranks in this fashion. The

forces were not homogeneous, the numerous volunteers among them were an element of weakness and disorder, the discipline was deplorable and daily weakening. It was a general opinion throughout Europe that the French line could not perform its task, and the first weak attempts of the army of the north to invade the enemy's territory in what is now Belgium, and was then the Austrian Netherlands, resulted in a miserable rout and a disgraceful and murderous mutiny. The Prussian and the Austrian forces were slowly gathering for an invasion. That the crown, still in command of those ill-equipped regiments and guns, desired the success of the invasion was morally certain to the populace of Paris; and the populace of Paris was right.

The king was manifestly of a moral compact with the enemy, his chief city already holding him answerable for treason, when, in June, long before the invading army had reached the frontier, but when the terror of it was already rising high in the masses of the capital, Lafayette moved. His move was in favor of the king.

His army was the smallest of the three, but the best provided; what was more important in the tem-



CARTOON OF THE THREE ORDERS (THE CLERGY, NOBILITY, AND COMMONS) IN THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY FORGING THE NEW CONSTITUTION

per of that moment, it was really attached to its chief; for though Lafayette was prepared to defend the king against Paris, yet the king had a traditional value in the soldiers' eyes which Paris had not gained, and they knew that, in the midst of much intrigue the general's character had nothing in it at all of intrigue; he was known and still approved by his soldiery.

In reply to the growing menace of the populace in Paris the king dismissed his liberal ministers. The parliament declared that they carried with them the regrets of the nation.

It was on the thirteenth of June that this grave act was accomplished and that the final resistance of Louis and his wife to the Revolution was undertaken. This premature act on the part of the monarchy, of itself a rupture with the popular forces of Paris, was suddenly given a new and much more violent complexion by the decision which Lafayette, at the head of his frontier army, awaiting the invader, took when he heard of it.

It was on the thirteenth of June that the king so acted; the news of it reached the army on the fifteenth; on the sixteenth Lafayette wrote his fa-

mous letter to the parliament, denouncing the Jacobin Club, which was, so to speak, the staff of the new popular movement against the foreign intrigues of the crown.

Parliament was seized of that letter and debated it on the eighteenth, and parliament, as constitutional in its mediocre and null professional mediocrity as the parliaments of a time of peace must always be, approved of Lafayette's intervention.

Here let the reader pause to appreciate how decisive Lafayette's move was bound to be. Let him remember that the future, known to us, was unknown to the men of that time; that their past alone was known to them. Let him recall how widely circulated—more circulated than the name of any other man at that moment—was the name of Lafayette; let him appreciate the reputation for integrity which he enjoyed with the mass of the nation, and the consequent trust which they therefore justly placed in his liberal principles; let him further see the foreign forces, a hundred thousand strong, marching, at last, against the French, and the nominal head of the French state in league with them; finally let him not forget that a French army is to

the French, as a Roman army was to the Romans, the most living thing in the nation, the most vital of its organs,—it is an essential point,—and he will perceive what an enormous business must have arisen, and did arise, about this letter. It was virtually a pronunciamento.

Lafayette talked of "his brave soldiers." A note of menace ran throughout the document, and it was this which kept the parliament, despite its sympathy with the constitutional policy and its dread of a popular rebellion, doubtful as to its vote. At first it decreed the printing of the letter and its distribution; then Guadet, eloquent and merciless, changed that attitude by a speech. The Assembly referred the letter to a committee, and Robespierre that night roused the Jacobins.

This letter of Lafayette's fell at the very moment when the king, having dismissed his liberal ministry, chose to oppose his formal veto to the two measures wherein the parliament was most in sympathy with the populace—the decree against the nonjuring clergy and the decree for forming a great camp of volunteers. The reply of Paris to both was the huge and peaceable, but very menacing,

rising which is called "the Day of the twentieth of June." For hour after hour the radical masses poured through the king's palace; blood was not shed, and no actual insult was offered, but, to use a military metaphor, Paris had proved itself capable of mobilization in those hours, and armed conflict between it and the court seemed as near and as inevitable as would armed conflict between two regular forces mobilized and in contact upon the field.

A courier to the frontier, leaving Paris upon the morning of the twenty-first, would normally reach the ultimate posts of the army late upon the twenty-second; but Lafayette at this moment, always an active and even officious commanding officer, was passing from post to post. The news of the insurrection did not reach him in the camp outside Maubeuge, where was for the moment his station, but at Bavay, an hour or two off to the west.

Lafayette never acted with a Gallic fugue, though often with a reasonable promptitude. He did not, as legend will have it, take horse and make for Paris, booted and spurred. He communed with himself for some hours before arriving at any



A POPULAR PRINT AT THE TIME OF THE REVOLUTION

decision, and then took, with no particular rapidity, the road for Paris.

He did not, as legend will again have it, dash into the Assembly, splashed and sweating, at the end of a hot ride; on the contrary, he visited those authorities in the capital who were in sympathy with his views, and not until the twenty-eighth did he present himself at the bar of the Assembly; the excitement was already a week old.

When he did appear before the parliament thus in person, it was with singular effect. A majority, challenged by Guadet, refused to condemn him for leaving the army without permission; he again urged the parliament by voice and presence, as he had formerly urged it by letter, to suppress the popular societies and especially the democratic focus of the Jacobins. He was applauded as he walked past the members after his speech; and it seemed for a moment as though this dramatic, but not theatrical, intervention had achieved something.

But it was the fate of that strict character to effect nothing at all in all his long and sterile life! A Frenchman in touch with France, finding himself, as Lafayette found himself, cheered by num-

bers of his old National Guard when leaving the parliament, would have gone straight with the mob to the Jacobins and destroyed them, taking such consequences as might have followed. But Lafayette loved order, apparently for its own dull sake, and that day ended in nothing but a further accentuation of the breach between himself and the new Revolutionary group in Paris.

Of that group the now rising name, soon to be the leading name, was that of Robespierre; and if you will turn to Robespierre's writing and speaking during those days you will find how accurately he judged the temper of his own people despite his Picard coldness. The cruelest and the truest thing said against Lafayette in those days of failure was Robespierre's phrase: "Lafayette, to succeed, must first win a victory over the enemy."

Lafayette stayed the following day, the twenty-ninth of June, Friday, in Paris, discovered how bitterly the old constitutional position had made him hated at court, and learned the truth of the phrase he had heard—the queen's phrase—"We will not be saved twice by M. de Lafayette." On Saturday, the thirtieth, he took his way back to his army.

Now, note that throughout all this that army was still closely bound to its general, and that Lafayette, upon his return to his camp, was still secure in the loyalty of his regiments. It was consonant with his character that, without caring in the least for the insults of the court, he still worked to secure the safety of the king and, therefore, of the Constitution. He suggested the retirement of the court to Compiègne, "a town," he pathetically writes, "within the limits to which the Constitution allows the king to travel from the capital"; he promised to lend the authority of his name and the active aid of his old National Guard to the monarch if such an evasion were attempted. He was ready, in a word, to do all that a soldier could do for the saving of Louis and for the crushing of the Paris radicals—just short of acting "in an unconstitutional manner." That he would never do! And meanwhile Fate and Europe and the French people between them were moving with no more care for the Constitution than right and anger and love ever have for a letter or a precedent.

All that first fortnight of July was full of three great things in motion: the pomp of Austria going

to the coronation of the Emperor at Frankfort before the forces of Austria should be launched upon France; the Federates from all the French departments (and notably the armed battalion from Marseilles) coming up to Paris to take part in the great feast-day of the nation; the gathering of the Prussian forces upon the Rhine. Meanwhile two other things waited: Lafayette and his army waited to save the crown in Paris; the court in Paris waited for the success of the invader and for its own deliverance.

Upon Saturday, the fourteenth of July, the Federates from all over France held their great national feast in the capital. On that same day the emperor was crowned in Frankfort; upon the following Tuesday (it was the anniversary of the Massacre of the Champ-de-Mars!), with Paris in full effervescence from the arrival of the Federates, the Jacobins took their opportunity, Robespierre leading them, and petitioned the parliament to impeach Lafayette for treason. The parliament temporized. Upon the nineteenth, when the question was again raised, it refused to condemn the general. Old Dückner came from his frontier command to



MAXIMILIEN ROBESPIERRE

Paris; he was publicly accused in parliament of having conspired with Lafayette to march upon the capital in favor of the king. That charge was disproved so far as letters could disprove it; but in the midst of the excitement which it raised yet another step was taken by Destiny.

The Army of the Allies being at last concentrated at Coblenz, the Duke of Brunswick, its commander in chief, signed and issued upon the twenty-fifth of July the manifesto which had been largely dictated from the French court, and of which the most violent clause proceeded from the queen herself; it threatened the parliament and the town of Paris with military execution if the king were not restored to his pre-revolutionary power.

That document was known in Paris upon the twenty-eighth, and for the next few days only the time and the conditions of the last conflict between the Royal Guards, their allied volunteers and militia upon the one hand, and the populace upon the other, were in doubt.

The armed battalion of Federates from Marseilles had marched in upon the thirtieth of July. Upon the eighth of August one last attempt was

made to get the parliament to impeach Lafayette, and for the last time the parliament, in its sympathy with the crown and against the Paris populace, refused. The motion was rejected by 406 to 224.

Robespierre had never given a better example of his sharp and piercing judgment than when he had said at the Jacobins, "The parliament will not save the nation; the nation must save itself."

All the night of the ninth of August Paris watched in a vigil; the windows were full of lights, the hot dark was filled with the sound of bells and of the royal troops marching in to occupy their post of garrison in the Tuileries. A force of somewhat over six thousand, provisioned with a full complement of ammunition, awaited the insurrection. This insurrection seemed at first delayed and imperfect. By mid-morning the assault on the palace was begun by an ill-armed and unorganized mob. There was a moment when the garrison of the palace appeared to have succeeded. The populace returned in greater force and conquered. The monarchy was swept away, the royal family imprisoned, and all the power of parliament passed at

the same moment into the hands of its extreme and most democratic party.

Such was the day known in history as the Tenth of August. The army of Brunswick was within a day's ride of the frontier. Lafayette, whose command stood barring Brunswick's way, was instantly called upon by his own conscience to determine whether he should save the soil of his country or his constitutional king.

It was a gendarme flying from Paris, and later an officer also flying from the capital, that brought him the news of the Tenth of August; he so received it, probably late upon Sunday, the twelfth of August. He guessed that a provisional, and therefore, to him, a usurping, government had been set up in the place of the old constitutional ministry. News came through slowly, but Lafayette learned certainly before Monday that it was so. The old dismissed ministry had been "unconstitutionally" recalled by the parliament, acting, of course, under the pressure of the populace of Paris, and to these had been added most "unconstitutionally" certain ultra-revolutionary names, notably Danton's. This new government and its creature, the purged

and diminished parliament, was sending out commissioners, post-haste, who should bear its orders to the armies upon the frontiers, and obtain their allegiance to the new and quasi-republican system which Paris and the Jacobins had established by hard fighting upon the Friday before. Upon Tuesday, August 14, the three commissioners, members of the parliament bearing such orders, arrived at Lafayette's headquarters in Sedan; but Lafayette had already made up his mind.

When the three members of the parliament presented their message to the municipality of Sedan, the mayor and corporation of that town, in agreement with Lafayette and perhaps under his orders, arrested them, and imprisoned them in the citadel of the place; Lafayette himself provided a guard.

On Tuesday the whole army was mustered in the meadows which lie beyond the river before the town, the scene of the worst sufferings after the defeat of 1870, and an oath to obey the old Constitution was administered to them.

Three corps refused the oath; one company of grenadiers, one of the new volunteer battalions,—that raised by the Department of the Allier,—and



GEORGES JACQUES DANTON

most notably the gunners. They swore to obey "the representatives of the nation and no other." Certain, though not all, of these were put under arrest by Lafayette, and his act of rebellion against the new government was completed.

The mass of his army was still intact, and would still have followed him had he then broken camp and marched on Paris. But here comes the final and most characteristic act of all: Lafayette did not march upon Paris. He "put himself at the disposition of the civil authority of the Department of the Ardennes"; he asked the neighboring departments in which troops of his command were stationed for their orders; he refused to use military force save at the orders of authorized civilian government; he preferred his political idea and creed to every practical necessity of the situation; or, as he would have put it, to every temptation the situation might offer him. He did more: he allowed letters, pamphlets, and even emissaries from Paris to circulate freely among his men; he allowed one of the battalions in revolt against him, and even the commander of the guns in revolt against him, to write freely to the new government in Paris, swear-

ing their adhesion to it. He sent to department after department submitting the military to the civil power and awaiting their decision, when any other man would have marched straight upon the capital. Paris and the new order learned how its commissioners had been treated; new commissioners were at once sent out; upon Sunday, the nineteenth of August, the parliament impeached the general. But meanwhile he had decided upon his own fate.

Lafayette upon that Sunday morning judged, first, that his army would now no longer follow him in an enterprise against its fellow-citizens; *next,* that his conscience would not allow him to serve the new régime.

Taking with him a handful of friends (a few who joined him against his will raised the total of the commissioned officers with him to twenty-three), he proceeded through the forest of Ardennes to the little town of Bouillon, then in French territory, now in Belgic. He first left minute orders for the disposition of his army, notably for the safety of the outposts to prepare them against the shock of the immediate invasion; he also left behind

him all his official papers, sealed and in order for use of his successor whoever that might be. Before sunset he crossed the bridge in front of the famous little forest town, with its enormous castle and crusading legend, and rode out northward with his companions, twelve miles and more through the gathering darkness, toward Rochefort, all the way in foreign land.

To that road he was compelled. Did he deviate to the left he would fall among the French outposts in the valley of the Meuse beyond the woods; upon his right was the line of the Austrian advance.

He did not even know whether Rochefort itself was occupied or not. He hoped it was not, for he intended to make his way up through the Netherlands to England, and so to America. At the very gates of Rochefort a great fire burning warned him of an outpost, and he knew that the place was held. Nevertheless, he hoped against hope to pass through free. The commander of that post, a French noble who had gone over to the enemy, gave him so much liberty as to permit him to ride on with his companions toward Namur, or, rather, to send a messenger on before him to obtain the pass-

ports. But Lafayette was already recognized and known.

In Namur the Austrian commander, Motielle, was beside himself with joy on hearing the name. He shouted and repeated to himself aloud, "Lafayette! Lafayette!" as though he held in his power not the last sad exile from a soil too violently in love with freedom, but the most active of the new revolutionaries themselves; for the name of Lafayette, execrated by all the Nationalists for that of a traitor in league with the king, was also execrated throughout the privileged classes of Europe for that of a rebel who had destroyed the majesty of the French crown. Between these opposing camps he had no body of friends. It must ever be so with principle. It was to be so with Robespierre himself at last.

The governor of Namur held him and sold him, a valuable prey, and he passed into the prisons of the allies.

The grounds which history possesses upon which to base its conception of Lafayette differ from those which suffice for most characters, and espe-

cially for most military characters, because two traditions concern him.

Of these two traditions, the one which sprang in the United States of America concerns a young, enthusiastic man, so young as to be almost a boy, but reinforced by an independent position, a brilliant fortune, and very solid talents, who voluntarily led the rally of young Frenchmen in support of the new republic and who differed for the better in its eyes from most of his contemporaries in the point that he did sincerely and from the bottom of his soul admire those main principles upon which the Revolution in America proceeded.

The other tradition is that of a man in the flower of his age concerned with a vast transformation of European society—a transformation springing directly from the energy of his own people, and who so undervalued or misjudged it that, after appearing continually in places of capital importance and as continually failing to do more than preserve his principles, he ended by neither saving the institutions to which he was attached nor by so much as impeding their destruction. At last, equally con-

demned by each section of contemporary opinion and power, he abandoned his high command upon the frontier in the first crisis of the great war between the Revolution and the kings, and subsequently appeared neither in the one camp nor in the other, neglected by both in common, a prisoner in the hands of foreigners. One picture is that of a hero; the other that of a pale figure bringing treason and certainly a prig.

These two traditions are easily reconcilable if we draw for ourselves from the many sources available to us a true picture of the man. We shall then perceive why Marie Antoinette, with her ardent, but unsympathetic, temperament, was violently repelled by him, especially in his maturity; we shall understand how Carlyle, even with his grossly insufficient reading, was capable of drawing only the pale caricature which is among the worst failures of his great study; and above all, we shall understand how, in what is for European history the crisis of his life, Lafayette neither led nor attacked the armed forces of his own people, but deliberately effaced himself; and as a consequence of his action, though not of his own volition, suffered those years

of effacement and prison. It is fortunately possible to us, though it is not easy, to reconstruct the character which lay at the root of these varied actions and especially of these singular inactions.

Other great names of the French Revolution are obscured by the heat of the main struggle in 1793 by the fact that they perished or fell into oblivion or betrayed their original convictions. The violent prejudices that attach to the passions of such moments have made it difficult for the chief men of 1789–95 to be rightly judged. For whether we seek the testimony of friends or of enemies, we are aware of conspicuous and worthless exaggeration. In the case of Lafayette we do not suffer from these causes of distortion. He was indeed most bitterly denounced,—in the crisis of his life when he abandoned his army there was hardly any to praise him,—but he was not present among the French in those moments of superhuman exaltation which followed upon the great war and therefore he escaped unbalanced praise and blame therein; on the other hand, he did not perish in that storm, as did countless others, nor did he deserve or receive oblivion upon its close. On the contrary, he entered public

life again and played a great part in it. Added to such opportunities for being rightly judged, his own rigid adherence to his original principles has gained him the reward which always attaches to such fidelity—an untroubled place in history. From all these causes he can, if we take the trouble to watch him narrowly, be seen clearly by posterity.

Let us then attempt a summary judgment of his character. The central axis upon which that character turned may readily be perceived and defined, for it was at once so simple and fixed within so slight an accretion of secondary qualities that it is plainly visible through them.

Lafayette was essentially of that type which has had for its philosophy, perhaps from the beginning of society, the scheme to which antiquity gave the title of stoic. He was immovable in the service of those truths which he perceived; but the truths which he perceived were few, obvious, and though of vast, yet not of the very last, importance. He conceived that an adhesion to such truths was sufficient for man and still more certainly sufficient for himself.

An absolute and unswerving demeanor, drawn from so strict an adherence to so limited a creed, lent him those qualities which are not more admirable, though they are more popular, when they are produced by convictions larger and more comprehensive. Those are, first, courage of that rare and indomitable sort which meets with precisely the same rigidity physical danger, corporeal pain, public shame, the accidents of loss in affection or fortune, the change of environing things, the default of human support even where it seemed most sure; secondly, a minute attention to duty where duty is commanded by the logical consequences of one's faith rather than suggested by the affections; thirdly, a generosity in action which proceeds not from charity or any warmth of temperament, but from an apprehension of what a creed demands, so that if the creed demand in certain circumstances such and such a sacrifice, the sacrifice, however great, is unhesitatingly and immediately made.

To such adherence to fixed principle and in the consequences of that tenacity lay the core of Lafayette's nature; beyond that core there was little else. We must add to it certain extraneous details not

proceeding from it, but merely aggregated to it. He was vain after the fashion of vanity which is certainly not a vice and is almost a virtue, since it betrays a great carelessness of power and an indifference to anything less noble than praise. Again—what has nothing to do with his vanity—he loved to find himself leading men, though he did not love the act of leadership.

This last passion, the love of leadership, one might ascribe to an energetic activity in him were such activity discoverable in other relations of his life; but it is not so discoverable; for in conversation, in the emission of ideas, in the criticism of others, in writing, planning, or doing, he was not conspicuously active, nor was he conspicuously active in the things of the body. He was not laborious; he neither liked nor understood the expression of high energy; nor, conversely, was he prone to be exhausted or to be tempted to lassitude in any form.

Many men in a phase of their early youth betray this species of mind. It is the same cast of mind which often makes youth, in that early phase, uncompromising, constantly asserting truths apparently universal and patent, and ready to judge the

enormous, and for it untried, complexities of human affairs.

The long process of years usually disturbs that image: for good and for evil it is changed; and men as they advance in experience tend at once to suffer what the poet has nobly called "the contagion of the world's slow stain." But at the same time they grow to admit into their faces a humorous charity and a confession of fellowship with the uncertain and erring human millions of which they are each only one tiny element. Repeated anxiety and the repeated example of the pains and dishonor that follow upon poverty make men as they grow older exaggerate the importance of wealth and they lose the just sense of proportion in mortal arrangements. Principle will be sacrificed to affection, especially if that affection be the constant and glowing affection for a family involved in one's own precarious fortune; the manifold imbecility of men in their political action will weaken interest in, though it does not in the same degree destroy intellectual conviction of those prime political truths which make of sane and just men republicans. On the other hand, in a hundred little details which

must count heavily in the fate of the soul, men so perturbed and declined from their early standing show comprehension, charity, a good individual judgment for practical affairs, and commonly, as life advances, develop virile and useful rules of action for themselves and for others. These rules are but subconscious in their origin, they are difficult to formularize; but they are wise and are proved wise by their fruits.

Why did Lafayette fail to acquire this enlargement—for it is an enlargement—of the mature mind, as he failed also to suffer those contaminations which commonly accompany it?

Interior causes were present, to preserve him unchanged. There stood in his mind a barrier against expanding emotion. The native limitation which made him a stoic (and through which he has been less justly called a prig) would in all circumstances have restrained his development, keeping him from knowing men, but also preserving intact his high conviction and his conspicuous morals. I say a personal trait of this kind was present from the beginning, native to him, and necessarily present in his soul; but this interior preservative constraint

was powerfully aided by two external circumstances: first, he was immensely wealthy and had not in the whole of his life acquired one prolonged and educative experience of what the absence of wealth might effect in the character of man; secondly, the strong and molding emotions which come to nearly all men successively came to him (as did the full control of his wealth) all at once and that in very early youth. He was married in his teens; he was a father before he was twenty; he was a military hero with a fame not national, but universal, before he was of age.

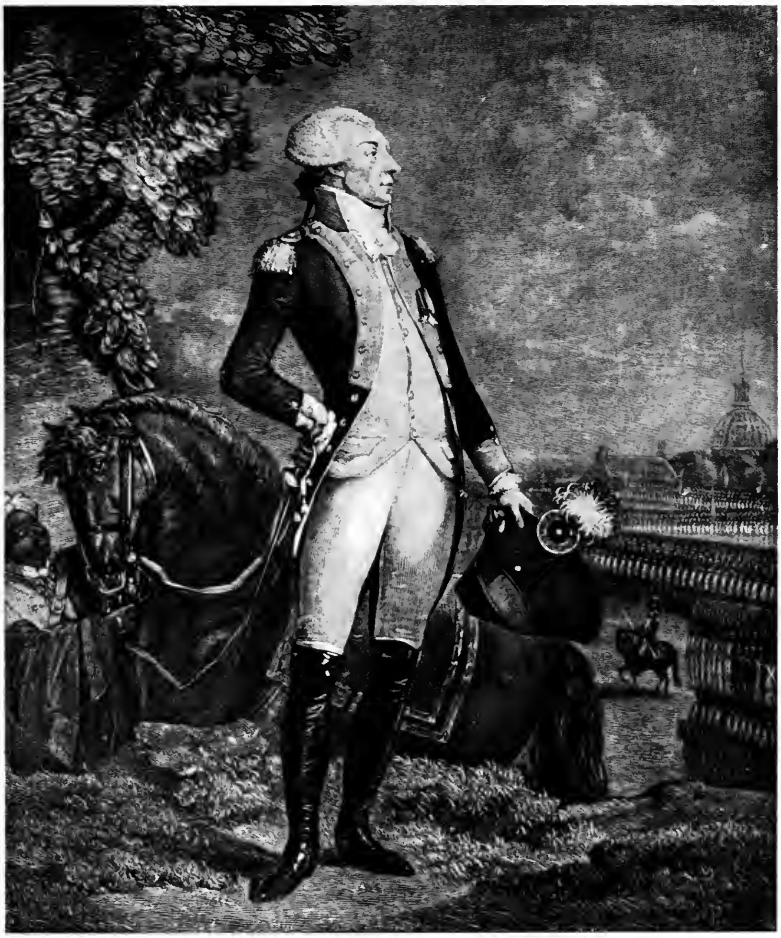
In those same years he was flooded by surrounding society with every article of his political creed, and it was stamped upon him in that plastic period of life by overwhelming success both of his own efforts in the service of that creed, and of that creed's general success in its first undertakings.

The Declaration of Independence he had helped to make triumph; once it had triumphed he had witnessed—from a distance it is true, and with some of the too hopeful illusions of distance—the prosperous career of its principles upon its native soil. Such pressure, coming at such a moment in the de-

velopment of a man, crystallizes him; and for fifty mortal years, from the achievement of American independence to his death in 1834, Lafayette remained Lafayette without growth or change.

For pages so few as these a summary so short must suffice. The reader will expand for himself the consequences following upon this type of sincerity, conviction, and fixed, immutable inexperience. In religion it was inevitable that such a mind should be dry. He professed, of course, a deism which some may claim in old age to have turned to conceptions a trifle warmer and more full of stuff, but I confess these tinges of color seem to me superadded from social fashions contemporary with his later years, when the Catholic Church, which in his youth nearly all the educated class in his country took to be a dying superstition, had reasserted its vitality.

In politics such a man of course stood for those plain and fundamental principles which all clear thought has discovered to be the basis of just government: that sovereignty must reside with the people; that the usurpation of that sovereignty, whether effected in the name of the people or in



MARIE JEAN PAUL ROCH YVES GILBERT MOTIER, MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE

contempt of them, must be equally resisted; that laws once fixed, having in them necessarily an element of conflicting detail, necessarily lead to dissensions, but must be obeyed by all indifferently until they are changed by the popular voice; that violence is permissible only against aggression from without or illegal action from within, and so forth.

On the other hand, through an illusion common enough in men of this type, he confounded certain modern adjuncts of these ancient truths with the truths themselves. Thus he thought there was something sacred in representation and could hardly distinguish between the nation and an electoral body proceeding from it. He believed in the equality of man without seizing the fact that this, so far from being self evident, is a tremendous and mystical dogma allied with a particular type of religion and rising or perishing with it. He took for granted the necessity in any free state of leaving the courts of justice untrammeled by the executive, but he neither devised nor thought there needed to be devised any scheme whereby the courts, thus untrammeled, should be kept pure.

The defects in such a character superficial critics

ascribe to an excess of the intellectual faculties. It is truer to say that they are due not to an atrophy of these, but to a limitation of them. No man, for instance, worked in an atmosphere more purely intellectual than St. Thomas Aquinas, yet his most general judgments upon the principles of government stand as firm as Aristotle's, upon which they are based and which they complete.

The excellences, again, of such a character as Lafayette's are by many imagined, and would certainly have been by himself ascribed, to the dominating power of reason. If we look closely, it is not so. Between his strong convictions—and they were shared by countless thousands—whether in religion or in civic theory, between such theories, I say, and the expression of them in life lies the function of the will. The great glory of such characters as Lafayette's lies in this, that though their intellects may not have had the strength to grasp transcendental things or to perceive the complexity of the material with which a politician must deal, yet an unswerving determination to do what their rule tells them is discoverable throughout their lives. No greater thing can be said of any man; and it is

not upon the moral side, but rather upon the reasonable, that such characters fail. Those who imagine the fate of the soul to depend upon right action within its lights will be secure of such men's salvation.

THE END

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High lights of the French
revolution